

AN ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE:  
A SEARCH FOR MOBILE PASTORALISM AND SEGMENTARY LINEAGE  
SYSTEMS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RECORDS OF  
EARLY BRONZE AGE SYRIA

PART I: METHOD AND THEORY

by  
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## **Abstract**

During the Early Bronze Age (EBA), an area of Northern Mesopotamia including northern Syria and the western Jezireh played host to an unprecedented degree of urbanization and population growth. Emerging models of EBA society stress that this urbanization was made possible by the expansion of intensive regimens of specialized agro-pastoral production into arid zones near to and ostensibly beyond the conventional zone of reliable rainfall agricultural. While it is clear that a certain amount of pastoral production was directed by hierarchical political organizations based in urban centers, the degree to which this characterized all pastoral production is not yet a subject of consensus. Many scholars have assumed the presence of mobile pastoral groups were present in the Syrian countryside at various points during the EBA, with various sociopolitical characteristics and to differing historical effects. This dissertation is aimed at assessing material and historical evidence relevant to the question of whether or not such groups did exist, to what effect, and also at assessing the extent to which these questions can be answered.

To this end, this study has been divided into two volumes. The first volume involves a critical analogical review of the ethnographic record. There it is argued that this review suggests a specific sociopolitical character to mobile pastoral societies. Specifically, mobile pastoralism is associated with a sociopolitical system characterized by a segmentary political structure operating on a principle of balanced opposition and without institutions of political hierarchy. This can be termed a 'segmentary lineage system'. This system is not simply a revival of segmentary lineage theory. That theory has been routinely criticized for perceived faults, foremost among them the observation

that no society has a segmentary lineage system in practice, only as a discursive model of action. Furthermore, it is argued confusion resulting from the use of the term ‘tribe’ to refer both to mobile pastoral groups in the Middle East and North Africa with other specialized meanings has served to obscure the relevance of this segmentary lineage model. By reference to a diachronic perspective of culture change provided by Anthony Giddens’ theory of structuration, it is argued that this situation obtains in so-called ‘tribal’ societies in the Middle East and North Africa as a result of sudden and drastic changes to their material existence resulting in the modern period. At the end of this volume, a material model of mobile pastoral societies is developed from these sociopolitical traits, as well as its correlated material traits and is adapted for an ancient context.

The second volume of this dissertation involves the application of the sociopolitical and material model of segmentary lineage systems to the historical and material record of EBA Syria and other material and historical records with potential relevance to it. The application of the models to these records reveals that no material or historical evidence exists to indicate the presence of mobile pastoral communities until the very end of the EBA, near the time of its transition to the Middle Bronze Age (MBA). Previous arguments to the contrary, both historical and archaeological, have either been built upon indirect evidence or supposition regarding the sociopolitical nature of mobile pastoral communities that is simply not unique to them. While absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence, it is argued by comparison to the MBA, when the material and historical record unambiguously confirms the presence of such groups, that in the case of the EBA, the absence of evidence is indeed absence in fact.

The results of this study support the emerging model of Syrian society at this time as being characterized by an unprecedented amount of subsistence specialization, regional integration, and sedentarization. It suggests that the vast majority, if not all pastoral production was unified within a single sociocultural framework. The results of this study also highlight the centuries surrounding the EBA/MBA transition as particularly significant for the introduction of mobile pastoralism and the development of segmentary lineage systems in Syria. Finally, although the sociopolitical and material models of mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems were ultimately not found to be directly relevant to most of the EBA in Syria, it was nevertheless a necessary step to addressing the existence of such groups. It serves also to contribute a new paradigm against which future research results may be compared to further refine or revise the understanding of EBA Syria offered here. It also offers a paradigm for the study of mobile pastoral communities in the archaeological and historical records of the ancient Near East beyond the EBA.

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Readers: Jane Guyer and Paul Delnero



*For Syrians—past, present, and future.*

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**An Absence of Evidence:**  
**A Search for Mobile Pastoralism and Segmentary Lineage Systems in the**  
**Archaeological and Historical Records of Early Bronze Age Syria**

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For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
Department of Near Eastern Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, 2016

**Chapter 1**  
**Introduction**

**The Purpose of this Dissertation**

In the last decade, a growing consensus has come to characterize disparate social, political, and economic aspects of Early Bronze Age (EBA) societies in Syria. Beginning in approximately the last century of the fourth millennium BC, many urban centers of northwestern Syria and the Syrian Jezireh either disappeared or were greatly diminished in size. In the immediately proceeding period, at the very beginning of the EBA, the dispersal of small, self-sufficient agricultural communities has been documented in many parts of northern and eastern Syria. After five centuries, just before the middle of the third millennium BC, the region witnessed a sudden flourish of urbanization (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 33). At this time, urban sites served as regional economic and political capitals, sitting at the centers of highly managed and intensively exploited agricultural settlement systems (Wilkinson 1994). The broad distribution of increasingly

international artifact styles and imported raw materials also speaks to an intense international trade of goods and ideas at this time. The uneven distribution of these goods, especially in mortuary contexts, indicates that this society was also stratified on the basis of economic and political inequality. Cuneiform texts, appearing at this time in relative abundance at the site of Tell Mardikh, reinforce this impression. Scholars have demonstrated that these texts were the byproducts of a sophisticated bureaucratic system at the heart of the ancient city-state of Ebla, that was engaged in managing land use and maximizing economic—and especially agro-pastoral—productivity (Archi 1992; Archi 1993a). The last four centuries of the third millennium witnessed an uneven and sporadic pattern of both site-specific and, in some cases, region-wide disruptions to sedentary life that eventually brought the urbanized, agriculturally intensive EBA pattern of sedentary life to an end (Schwartz 2007). Converging opinions, drawn from increasing study of historical (Archi and Biga 2003; Biga 2003), archaeological (Wilkinson 2009; Wilkinson et al. 2012), and paleoenvironmental (Kuzucuoğlu 2007; Masi et al. 2013; Riehl et al. 2012) datasets suggest that the disintegration of the EBA system resulted from a combination of political unrest and environmental perturbations, which undermined economic systems that had been maximized for productivity at the expense of resilience (Smith et al. 2014: 159).

Despite an appreciation for the significance of both agricultural and pastoral production in sustaining EBA settlement systems, especially those located near the so-called ‘zone of uncertainty’ (e.g. Danti 2000), the nature of the social and political integration of those two modes of production has not been the subject of a similar consensus. Were these productive activities unified at a household level, settlement

level, were they coordinated only on a broader political level corresponding to the ancient polities known from the cuneiform corpus from Tell Mardikh, or were there relevant divisions of labor at multiple levels? To what extent did these relationships vary over time and space? How mobile was that part of the population engaged in pastoral production? What were the social and political ramifications of that mobility and pastoralism? Were there any habitually mobile, pastoral populations and what role did these groups play in either the EBA urban florescence with its evidence of increasing economic integration and specialization, or its collapse?

Presently, there is no coherent model of mobile pastoral society that has been adopted by scholars of the ancient Near East to serve as a basis for investigating the answers to these questions. Most often, scholars have relied on implicit models of mobile pastoral societies that have sometimes conflated mobile pastoralism broadly with discussions of ‘tribalism’—a term with a complicated history, especially for Middle Eastern societies—resulting in a broad spectrum of connotation (e.g. Gilbert 1975: 66; Kamp and Yoffee 1980: 93-94). These implicit models, along with the few explicit discussions of mobile pastoral societies of the ancient Near East, are also undermined in part by their ignorance of, or conscious rejection of segmentary lineage systems, a controversial sociopolitical model that, though largely having fallen out of favor subsequent to the Second World War, has continued to be a subject of research among Middle Eastern ethnographers (e.g. Salzman 2000). This dissertation seeks to assess historical and archaeological evidence for one particular type of division of agricultural and pastoral labor in Syria during the Early Bronze Age (EBA), namely a division between sedentary communities, and habitually mobile, pastoral communities sometimes

referred to as ‘tribes’. A critical review of segmentary lineage systems (Chapter 3), and a review of how the evolution of the term ‘tribe’ (Chapter 2) has obscured the structural significance of these systems, will show that the division between sedentary and mobile pastoral societies has a specific structural significance. This structural distinction has implications for the historical understanding of EBA Syrian society. This study, then, seeks to contribute to the understanding of the nature of the division of agricultural and pastoral labor in EBA Syria, and the historical significance of that relationship, by supplying an empirical, ethnographically-derived, analogical model for the investigation of mobile pastoralism in the historical and archaeological records of EBA Syria.

### **Structuralism, Functionalism, and Structuration**

The term ‘structure’, even in sociological and anthropological discourse, tends to be quite broad and its use is prone to cause confusion when an author does not specifically define its meaning. Its application in this study appeals specifically to Anthony Giddens’ use of the term in structuration theory. In that theoretical context, structure can be understood as a shorthand for structuring principles, which guide and contextualize human actions and are, in turn, an emergent property of those actions (Giddens 1986: 185-189). Different aspects of social organization and different features of social systems, to the extent that they provide an ideological context for, and inform human action, can be understood as having a structuring effect (ibid). In structuration theory, these structures can be ordered from the most abstract to the most concrete, correlating directly with those principles least relevant, to those principles most relevant with respect to day-to-day activities (1986: 185). More abstract structuring principles,



though, despite their relative unimportance on a day-to-day level—the level at which an individual actor primarily expresses his agency—are the most fundamental principles ordering a society. These principles underlay more concrete structuring principles. Consequently, these abstract principles are least subject to change and tend to do so only over very long spans of time (1986: 185-189). Because these principles underlay all or most of a society's structuring principles, these higher-order structuring principles carry the broadest sociopolitical implications and structural differences between societies at this most abstract level will produce pronounced sociopolitical differences, to the point where the actions of an agent in one society might be incomprehensible to an agent with a different set of internalized structuring principles. The difference between sedentary societies and mobile pastoral societies—when these are segmentary lineage societies as they often are (for very specific reasons, demonstrated in Chapter 3)—manifest themselves at a fundamental level. The social and political difficulties caused by this division throughout middle eastern history are manifest in the dichotomy between ‘the Desert and the Sown’.

### **The Desert and the Sown**

The dichotomy of the ‘desert and the sown’, at least in academic literature, has been attributed to Owen Lattimore (1940)<sup>1</sup>, who proposed a perpetual conflict between nomadic societies of the steppes and deserts with sedentary, agricultural societies. Recently, it has become popular to dismiss this dichotomy as short-sighted, idealistic, and

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase, though, has a much more complicated history, which lays beyond the scope of these introductory remarks. It served, for instance, as the title of Gertrude Bell's 1907 travelogue.

contradicted by myriad ethnographic examples. The present attitude toward the dichotomy is well represented by Richard Bernbeck, who stated,

Near Eastern archaeologists and historians, and to a lesser extent also cultural anthropologists, have produced an image of past lifestyles as a stark, unrealistic dichotomy of almost unconnected mobile and sedentary groups. Reasons for this perception include the practices of fieldwork, analogical reasoning and ethnoarchaeology in the Near East, ancient historical sources, Orientalist literature and a simplifying historiography.

2008: 45

It is maintained here, however, that this dichotomy has a real significance. Sedentary, agricultural societies share certain structural features that unite them, regardless of differences in levels of sociopolitical hierarchy and inequality that serve to distinguish them from segmentary lineage societies. In segmentary lineage societies, operating with a principle of balanced opposition, nested hierarchies of kin groups serve to enforce customary law and protect the interests and rights of individuals and kin groups. Meanwhile, mobile pastoralism, in the absence of private ownership of any means of production other than animal herds, ordinarily precludes the trans-generational accumulation of wealth that would ultimately lead to the creation of relationships of sociopolitical inequality with complementary structuring principles. This is the dichotomy of the desert and the sown, and it relates in one respect to ecological and environmental differences between those societies. Some may read this statement as environmental determinism, but to do so would be to deny a meaningful subtlety: this distinction follows not from these environmental differences alone, but also from the way that societies order their social structure to adapt to them. These adaptations are not simple products of the environment—both mobile pastoralism and sedentary agriculturalism are two feasible adaptations to a wide range of ecological situations.

Whichever prevails in any given location, at any given time, will be the result of historical and ecological contingencies.

Confusion over this structural dichotomy results in large part from the rejection of segmentary lineage systems as a set of principles of sociopolitical action. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, this rejection is an artifact of the ethnographic study of rapidly changing mobile pastoral societies in the face of the development of modern nation states with access to military and industrial technologies that fundamentally altered the relationship between ‘tribe and state’. In some corners, this led to the implication that any true dichotomy between the desert and the sown, to the extent that any could be maintained, resulted from an extreme degree of mobility—full nomadism (e.g. Michalowski 2011: 90). Anatoly Khazanov’s extremely influential monograph on the subject, *Nomads and the Outside World*, effectively challenged even this notion, however, by arguing vociferously that this extreme form of pastoralism was non-autarkic. Such groups relied, by definition, on close economic and, ergo, broader cultural ties with sedentary, agricultural societies. The full implications of this argument, drawing on a wide range of ethnographic literature, is considered in detail in Chapter 3. Another result of this confusion, though, is the conflation of mobile pastoral, ostensibly segmentary lineage societies, ‘tribal’ societies of southwest and central Asia, with other ‘tribal’ societies, in the sense of the word that has developed from its evolutionary use, referring to relatively simple and egalitarian societies, regardless of any particular structures or structuring principles (e.g. Porter 2012). This has only served to further obscure the structural relevance of segmentary lineage systems.

The result of these conflations is that a plurality of scholars have tended to discount the difference between mobile and sedentary societies. Particularly in the ancient Near East, it is not uncommon for perceived demographic changes to be understood in terms of either a process of sedentarization or mobilization, as the occasion requires. It is, of course, not impossible that this is the case. Structural divisions between human societies are not so absolute or insurmountable that individuals may not bridge them and acquire more than one ‘sociological imagination’, operating as competent agents in different sociopolitical frameworks. One cannot, though, assume that this sort of situation of internalization of multiple frames of structural reference, especially encapsulating such broad a region as southwest Asia or even Greater Mesopotamia, obtained at any point in time. Whether it did or not is an empirical question, just as much as the question of whether or not any segmentary lineage societies existed in these areas at any given point in time in the first place. So, at the risk of being labeled an orientalist, for instance as by Bernbeck, above, this dissertation seeks to rehabilitate the dichotomy of the desert and the sown as a structural distinction which has, heretofore, gone largely unnoticed both in scholarship of the Ancient Near East as well as in the social sciences more broadly.

### **Methodology, Epistemology, and the Problem of Analogy**

This study, then, is inspired by a desire to evaluate the evidence for and against the presence of segmentary lineage societies in Syria during the EBA and, thus, to begin to address the role played by the relationship between agricultural and pastoral pursuits of production of the pattern of changing relationships witnessed in the historical and archaeological records of EBA Syria. In order to do so, it must first be established that

segmentary lineage structures, in fact, truly structure human actions (Chapter 2), and then to demonstrate their relationship to mobility and pastoral production (Chapter 3). This sociological model can be used to investigate the historical record (Chapters 7 and 8). Once this model has been adapted for the technological and ecological context of Syria in the third millennium BC (Chapter 4), it can be applied to the archaeological record (Chapters 5 and 6), especially as regards the evaluation of previous arguments about both the presence of mobile pastoral groups and their significance to the course which the development of Syrian societies took at that time. The strength of conclusions of any such study made on the basis of analogy will rest entirely on the appropriateness of the analogy.

Historically, there has been a great deal of discomfort with analogical arguments among theorists and practitioners of the discipline (e.g. Freeman 1975; Gould and Watson 1982). The sources of this discomfort in any given period of time have their specific, proximate causes, but ultimately stem from the simple fact that analogical reasoning is inherently unscientific. In inductive arguments, the truth of a proposed conclusion does not follow from its premise but is instead inferred from experience and has a relationship to the truth only in terms of probability, not scientific certainty (Copi and Cohen 1994: 452). Such forms of knowing, then, are ultimately *subjective*.

At its simplest, the comparison supporting an analogical inference is a purely formal, point for point assessment of similarities or differences in the properties of source and subject. Interpretive conclusions are drawn, in this case, on the principle that where two objects share some properties, they may be expected to have others in common and they are, at their most simplistic, entirely indiscriminate with respect to what properties may comprise the additional (underdetermined) positive analogy.

Wylie 1985: 94

It was these simplistic, nearly indiscriminate, formal analogies that characterized the earliest uses of analogy applied to the prehistoric world (cf. Orme 1971) and the evolutionism of the nineteenth century, which soured the epistemological well of archaeology for generations (e.g. Freeman 1975; Gould and Watson 1982). This does not mean, though, that all forms of archaeological interpretation are merely *speculation*. One positive, enduring legacy of the New Archaeology has been a movement to improve archaeological interpretation by admitting its inherent shortcomings (cf. Wylie 1985; Stahl 1993; Hodder 1982). Although this means denying the possibility that archaeological interpretation can ever aspire to scientific standards of accuracy and hypothesis testing, it nevertheless enhances the quality of those interpretations through the elucidation of what, exactly, the features of a strong analogy are.

Wylie, in her seminal article, highlighted the basic attributes of a strong analogical argument. The first and most important feature revolves around the concept of relevance:

Relevance is typically understood to be a function of knowledge about underlying ‘principles of connection’ that structure source and subject and that assure, on this basis, the existence of specific further similarities between them... At their strongest, relational comparisons involve a demonstration that there are similarities between source and subject with respect to the causal mechanisms, processes, or factors that determine the presence and interrelationships of (at least some of) their manifest properties.

Wylie 1985: 94-95

In other words, relevant analogs have more in common than formal attributes, especially as these are without explained relationships to the inferences being drawn. Instead, they share a similarity that actually *structures the expression* of their formal attributes. This relevance must be established in two ways, by both “[1] expanding the base of interpretation and [2] elaborating the fit between source subject...” (Wylie 1985: 101). The former act involves the employment of a variety of sources to inform on a subject,

thus reinforcing the idea that a valid basis for a relational comparison exists. The latter involves the critical analysis of both similarities and dissimilarities, where dissimilarities are used to critically determine not only the validity of the analogy, but also the limits of the analogy (Wylie 1985: 97-98). Another important observation that Wylie has made is that stronger analogies tend to maximize similarities in their premises relative to their conclusions (1985: 98).

In a 1993 article endeavoring to further improve archaeological uses of analogy, Stahl recommended additional criteria, which can be understood as supplementary to those offered by Wylie. A large part of Stahl's contribution in that article centered on a critical approach to the use of ethnographic sources to construct analogies. Such sources were to be treated critically, in much the same way as historians are used to treating their own source texts: it is necessary to evaluate an ethnographic document in light of the author's relationship to the events described, his or her competence, the document's purpose, and its historical-methodological context (1993: 247). One particular problem that Stahl isolated is that of the 'ethnographic present'. Especially in the first half of the twentieth century (but see Clark 1951), there was a tendency among ethnographers to identify and report only those features of societies considered to be 'traditional,' in opposition to what were then perceived to be contemporary and non-traditional aspects of society (Stahl 1993: 241). In particular, one limitation of the ethnographic record that Stahl took pains to illustrate related to "the growing body of literature that stresses the changes that took place in non-Western cultural systems in the face of European imperial expansion..." (1993: 245). Such expansion, she maintained, had the effect of fundamentally changing the economic and, thereby, the social and political characters of

many ‘traditional’ societies in unexpected ways. I would extend this argument more broadly to suggest that simply the diffusion of technology such as the combustion engine and breach-loading rifle throughout the world beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even in those places which were not directly affected by European colonial contact, was a watershed moment in human cultural history, entailing similar revolutionary and unpredictable changes (cf. Rowton 1973b: 247). The implication is that ethnographic sources dating to periods after which these changes have taken effect, especially when a direct historical connection between source(s) and subject(s) is assumed or demonstrated—and thought to fortify the analogy—could suggest specious interpretations. This, then, “points to the need to treat continuity and change as *empirical questions*, not something to be assumed” (Stahl 1993: 246).

Together, the criteria offered by Wylie (1985) and Stahl (1993), outlined above, define the contemporary approach to archaeological interpretation, although it can be noted throughout this study that these principles are often violated in practice. It is this approach to analogical reasoning that will be adopted in this dissertation.

### **The Structure of this Dissertation**

The format of this dissertation, then, is modeled roughly on the analogical approach discussed above. This process prescribes seven steps for the development and application of an ethnographic analogy on an archaeological dataset.

1. Establish source-side boundaries,
2. Demonstrate formal-functional connections in sources,
3. Establish formal parameters, adapted to subject-side contexts,



4. Explore formal characteristics of subject-side,
5. Establish the wellness-of-fit of the analogy; account for conditions of poor fit or unexpected results,
6. Estimate the likelihood of a functional analogy, and
7. Synthesize subject context

The division of these steps will guide the discussion to follow but will not perfectly correlate with the chapters. Because this dissertation treats both historical and archaeological data sets, several steps will be repeated for each dataset.

In Chapter 2, I address the complicated history of the use of the term tribalism and argue that an original meaning, from which its numerous specialized, modern definitions derive, came into the western lexicon from pre-modern and ancient near eastern sources, where it referred specifically to a segmentary lineage society. By documenting the development of the various modern connotations, I will demonstrate how this relationship has been obscured, and how a complicated interplay between the two different meanings of the term tribe have been served to obscure and undermine the segmentary lineage system meaning of the term. I then supply a definition of segmentary lineage systems drawn from ethnographies of Middle Eastern societies published primarily in the last four decades.

In Chapter 3, I will make a review of so-called ‘tribal’ societies. This constitutes an expansion of sources as advocated by Wylie. This review has two purposes. The first purpose is to test if the definition of segmentary lineage systems offered in Chapter 2 relates to a cross-cultural, structurally valid model. It is argued that it does. The second purpose is to evaluate the relationships between segmentary lineage systems and

proposed cultural correlates. These are identified to be mobility, pastoralism, and segmentation, manifesting in a principle of egalitarianism that has been called ‘balanced opposition’. Furthermore, a chronological relationship between ‘tribal’ and ‘post-tribal’ societies will be established. These tasks will involve the critical evaluation of both historical and ethnographic documents, as advocated by Stahl (1993). Especially significant in this respect was the recognition that relatively recent technological changes have fundamentally altered the relationship between segmentary lineage societies and nation states, leading to the near ubiquity of ‘post-tribalization’ among so-called ‘tribal’ societies in ethnographic sources. Together, Chapters 2 and 3 constitute the first of four primary tasks of this dissertation: the creation of a sociological model of tribalism.

In Chapter 4, this model of tribalism will be used to inform the development of a material model of segmentary lineage systems. This will involve the identification of material correlates for the cultural correlates of these societies established in Chapter 3, and their adaptation to the technological and ecological context of Syria in the EBA. This constitutes the third step in the analogical process outlined above. This also constitutes the second primary task of this dissertation: the creation of a material model of tribalism.

The last four stages in the analogical process are repeated in stereo. In Chapters 5 and 6, the material context of EBA Syria will be investigated and its archaeological record will be compared with the material model of segmentary lineage societies developed in Chapter 4. Additionally, both the sociological model and the material model developed in Chapter 4 will be applied to previous arguments made on the basis of the archaeological record regarding evidence for the existence of mobile pastoral

communities. The sociological validity of models attempting to account for some cultural or sociological features of EBA Syrian society by reference to the natures of mobile pastoral societies will be evaluated. In Chapter 7, the segmentary lineage model developed in Chapter 2 will be applied to historical documents originating in EBA Syria, primarily texts from Tell Mardikh, ancient Ebla, which forms the bulk of the dataset. In Chapter 8, the same model will be applied to records from central and southern Mesopotamia, either those that are contemporary with EBA Syria and somehow relevant to it, or those which purport to communicate some reality of that time and place, though known only from later copies and literary traditions. A short review of relevant MBA documents from Mari will also be undertaken in order to compare the EBA results with this later period, when mobile pastoral groups are well attested, both archaeologically and historically, and to evaluate the validity of the segmentary lineage model in such a context. Together, Chapters 6, 7, and 8 fulfill the third task of this study, the application of the models to previous scholarship.

All of these results will be synthesized in Chapter 9. The results of this investigation will help clarify what role mobile pastoral societies played in shaping the course of development taken by human societies in EBA Syria by producing an empirically-defined, ethnographically-derived, structural model that overcomes the shortcomings of previous models constructed either with inadequate ethnographic references, or clouded by the complicated connotations of the term that are the legacy of the term ‘tribe’ in modern western scholarship. Ultimately, it will be argued that no positive evidence of mobile pastoralism or segmentary lineage systems can be identified in either the archaeological or historical record. Nevertheless, the identification of the

segmentary lineage model and its material characteristics is a necessary first step in establishing that its presence cannot be ascertained.

## **Chapter 2**

### **‘Tribe’ and Segmentary Lineage Theory**

Presently, scholarly attitudes towards the nature of mobile pastoralism in EBA Syria are multivocal. To a great extent, this multivocality reflects the situation of mobile pastoral studies in the social sciences more broadly. With rare exception (e.g. Porter 2000; Porter 2012), these attitudes do not derive from an engagement with primary ethnographic sources, but are, instead, either informed by synthetic treatments of the subject, or simply make no explicit reference to relevant scholarly discussions. The rarity of such engagement in the literature alone would be enough to justify a review in this study, but it is further made necessary by the lack of interaction—and seemingly lack of awareness—on the part of scholars of the ancient Near East with segmentary lineage systems, a type of sociopolitical system with special significance for mobile pastoral societies. This review will be split into two parts, taking place in both this and the following chapter.

This chapter will address a theoretical lacuna in studies of mobile pastoral societies in EBA Syria (and ancient Near Eastern studies more broadly): segmentary lineage theory, or, more specifically, segmentary lineage systems. Segmentary lineage theory has not been applied to EBA Syria (e.g. Porter 2012: 49) because it has been widely discredited among ethnographers for decades (e.g. Kuper 1982; Tapper 1983a). The most frequently cited criticism of the model has been that it exists only as a discursive model, and does not actually guide social behavior (e.g. Peters 1967). Some ethnographers of Middle Eastern, mobile pastoral societies have insisted that it is, nonetheless, a useful sociopolitical model of human interaction and have attempted to

rehabilitate it (Dresch 1986; Salzman 1978a; Salzman 2000), but these opinions are not represented in scholarship pertaining to EBA Syria. As this chapter will show, one reason may be that these attempts to rehabilitate segmentary lineage theory are not, themselves, without shortcomings. A solution to the problem of the division between action and discourse, though, is suggested by reference to Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration. Structuration emphasizes that contradictions between discursive and internalized sociopolitical structures result from culture change. It will be maintained here that ethnographic attestations of segmentary lineage models persist in the discourse of some Middle Eastern societies because of a kind of historical momentum, as a result of abrupt and significant technological, political, and economic changes in the recent past. This historical perspective has previously been lacking among anthropological treatments of segmentary lineage systems (e.g. Peters 1967).

Without an appreciation for the structural differences between mobile pastoral and sedentary societies, scholars have tended to discount the significance of the so-called 'dichotomy of the desert and the sown' (e.g. Tapper 1983; Khazanov 1984; Porter 2012). This has led to a conflation of mobile pastoralism with 'ruralism' and sedentism, often under the guise of 'kinship' (e.g. Porter 2012). This conflation has been aided by an accident of etymology and academia encapsulated in the terms 'tribe', 'tribal society', and 'tribalism'. The term 'tribe' in English has, originally, a biblical etymology and was related specifically to segmentary lineage societies. It is still used to refer to mobile pastoral groups in the Middle East. The adoption of this term into academia, originally for use in evolutionary models of sociopolitical development, led to the obfuscation of this original association, and the accumulation of other, less specific connotations,

including segmentation and kinship.<sup>2</sup> Following this development, differences between mobile pastoralists and sedentary societies were thought to relate only to extreme degrees of mobility and pastoralism (Khazanov 1984), such as were impossible in EBA Syria.

This chapter will begin with a review of attitudes and approaches towards mobile pastoral societies in studies of the ancient Near East. It will be demonstrated that these approaches have been characterized by a pattern of continually eroding distinctions, ultimately resulting in the conflation of mobile pastoralism and sedentism into a category of ‘tribalism’. Following this review, the bulk of this chapter will take the form of an historical review of segmentary lineage systems. This review will serve two purposes. First, it will demonstrate how the existence of segmentary lineage systems was initially obscured resulting from an early association with the terms tribe and tribalism, and the concomitant development of specialized uses of those terms. Second, it will demonstrate that disaffection with segmentary lineage theory, especially in the post-World War Two years, resulted from the unique functionalist application of that theory, especially in the case of the Nuer. Third, it will demonstrate that rejection of segmentary lineage systems in specifically mobile pastoral, Middle Eastern and North African contexts related to a contradiction between discursive models of behavior and actual human action that has not yet been adequately explained.<sup>3</sup> Finally, by reference to Giddens’ theory of structuration, this chapter will demonstrate that this contradiction results from recent cultural changes.

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<sup>2</sup> The concomitant association of the term with widely divergent theories and paradigms has also led to a significant accumulation of sometimes contradictory connotations. This proliferation of meanings have led some scholars to argue that the term approaches a condition of meaninglessness and uselessness for anthropologists, leading to advocacy for its abandonment (Colson 1971; Fried 1975; Colson 1986). In the face of the intuitive existence of some form or aspect of society called ‘tribe’ or ‘tribal’, though, and the ubiquity of the term in the academic literature, let alone the popular parlance, these calls have been mostly ignored. Others have attempted to rehabilitate the term, but no compelling alternatives have been offered.

<sup>3</sup> Attempts to rehabilitate segmentary lineage theory persisted in these contexts nonetheless, owing to the pervasive nature of these models in indigenous discourse.

Therefore, among those groups with discursive models of segmentary lineage systems those models reflect actual sociopolitical structures obtaining in the recent past, actually informing sociopolitical action in the past. The contribution of this chapter toward the methodological orientation of this dissertation, then, is to establish that segmentary lineage theory—more specifically segmentary lineage systems—cannot be rejected *a priori*. This point will form the foundation for the argument, developed in Chapter 3, that segmentary lineage systems correlate with a specific mode of mobile pastoralism, for specific structural reasons, and constitute significant structural differences between mobile pastoral and sedentary populations. This will have specific implications for the identification of mobile pastoral groups in both the historical and archaeological records of EBA Syria, and a consideration of their potential influence on the historical trajectory taken by those societies.

### **‘Tribe’ in Studies of the Ancient Near East**

‘Tribalism’ is a schizophrenic term in studies of the ancient Near East. It has a complicated semantic relationship with mobility and pastoralism.<sup>4</sup> In one sense, tribalism may be understood to signify the sociopolitical characteristics corresponding to a mobile pastoral group, distinguishing it from sedentary groups, usually resulting from the practice of mobile pastoralism. Another use of the term derives ultimately from evolutionary models as a broad comparative category, “Between Bands and States” (Gregg, ed. 1991).<sup>5</sup> In the latter sense, then, tribalism correlates with a certain degree of sociopolitical complexity, but lacks any significant political hierarchy or economic

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<sup>4</sup> This situation parallels the social sciences more broadly.

<sup>5</sup> A review of the connotations accumulating to this term since the introduction of Neo-evolutionary theory is provided in the excursus following this chapter.



inequality. In and of itself, these two different uses of the term are not necessarily problematic, but in practice they are becoming increasingly conflated in studies of the ancient Near East.<sup>6</sup> In this section, I will demonstrate how approaches to mobile pastoral societies in studies of the ancient Near East suffer from the absence of such a model.

Studies of interactions between mobile pastoral and sedentary societies in the ancient Near East, as often more broadly in the social sciences, have tended to explain cultural and sociopolitical differences between those groups by reference to their different material conditions—specifically, the nomadic aspect of ancient ‘tribal’ populations has been thought to set them apart as being unique and discrete from sedentary, agricultural polities. The socio-political organization of such groups was usually understood to be kin-based. One of the early models of nomadic ‘tribes’, persisting through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was the so-called “wave theory” of nomadic invasions. This theory, introduced by Sprenger (1869) and popularized by Winckler (1899)<sup>7</sup>, maintained that Semitic-speaking people originated in the steppes or deserts of the ancient Near East, whence they would periodically emerge, en masse, to invade the settled agricultural regions of the Fertile Crescent. Adherents to the wave theory also typically assumed that relations between nomadic and sedentary groups were hostile and that Semitic-speaking peoples were constantly engaged in a process of evolution from a mobile, pastoral way of life to a sedentary, agricultural subsistence

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<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, this conflation results from the complicated etymology of the word ‘tribe’, which has continually obscured the relationship between mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems—a relationship which will be demonstrated in Chapter 3. To some extent this conflation results from an inadequate appreciation of the structural difference between mobile pastoral and sedentary societies. In Chapter 3, I will argue that segmentary lineage systems comprise this distinction. In this chapter, it remains to be shown that such systems have a validity beyond that of merely discursive models.

<sup>7</sup> Aspects of this theory are present also in the writings of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholar, ibn Khaldûn.

strategy within the ideological and political boundaries of ancient states.<sup>8</sup> A somewhat attenuated version of this theory is represented in the scholarship of J.-R. Kupper, concerning Middle Bronze Age (MBA) Mari (e.g. 1957). In his adaptation of the theory, Kupper replaced the periodic waves of nomadic invaders with a continuous stream of settlers. Nevertheless, the basic assumptions of wave theory persisted in his adaptation: a nomadic *ur*-population existed independently, away from the territory of sedentary agricultural states, towards which portions of the population migrated, whereupon they came into conflict with sedentary, state-based authorities and eventually sedentarized.<sup>9</sup> The nature of the differences between these groups lay in their mutual exclusion and different ecological circumstances.

John Luke (1965) offered an influential argument against the application of this model of mobile pastoralism to the Mari archives of the Middle Bronze Age (MBA). He did this by pointing out the use of anachronistic and empirically inaccurate analogies with contemporary Bedouin populations. First, Luke maintained—contra the wave-theory—that ancient nomads could not have survived far beyond the perimeters of agricultural states. Contemporary and historical Bedouin populations could inhabit areas of high desert for part of the year only because of their reliance upon the domesticated camel, which was absent from southwest Asia in any significant number at least as late as the time of the Mari archives.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Luke argued the assumption that relations

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<sup>8</sup> Some assumptions held by the wave theory still persist in treatments of the MAR.TU in the Ur III period, the Amorites of the Old Babylonian period, several groups at Mari including the Suteans, Haneans, and Benjaminites (e.g. Buccellati 1966; Streck 2000; Jahn 2007; Sallaberger 2007), as well as other historically-attested groups, for instance the Gutis, the Kassites, Aramaeans, and the *habiru* of the Amarna Letters.

<sup>9</sup> To Kupper, the question of whether the nomad or the state subjugated the other depended upon the strength of sedentary society to resist nomadic invaders (1957: 262-63).

<sup>10</sup> For a comparison of the domesticated camel and ass, the latter of which was likely available to EBA populations in the ancient Near East, see discussion in chapter 4.

between nomads and sedentarists were characterized by hostility was based on an unfounded, popular myth about Bedouin society. Though admittedly effective warriors, Luke pointed out that Bedouin relations with sedentary populations were more often characterized by peaceful co-existence, necessitated by economic interdependence. The model he suggested was basically the reverse of the wave theory. Tribes, which he characterized as the rural population, were set against the urban-based state authorities. Instead of the tribes pushing in on the state as per the wave model, the state authorities pushed out on the rural population, attempting to align them to state interests, which were at odds with their own. To Luke, then, tribalism was a reaction—a secondary phenomenon resulting from the inability of the state to maintain that control. These two opposing paradigms are illustrated in figure 2.1:



**Figure 2.1. The traditional wave model and Luke's opposite-wave model<sup>11</sup>**

Luke's contribution to the discussion was the idea that there could be a degree of overlap between the realms of tribe and state. His treatment of tribalism and his criticism of earlier treatments focused primarily on the social, political, and economic effects of pastoral nomadism in a system characterized by two opposite political units: tribes and states. He defined the tribe largely in terms of its function, which was necessarily to provide many of the same functions of the sedentary state, without itself being a

<sup>11</sup> Wave theory is depicted on the left. The solid line represents the state's resistance to tribal aggression. Luke's opposite-wave theory is on the right. The dashed line enclosing both terms indicates the state's attempt to dominate the rural aspects of society.

sedentary state (1965: 37). Luke, however, made no effort to investigate the structural features of mobile pastoralists which made them unique from the urban state. His discussion of this aspect of tribalism was not unique from the scholarship that came before him. Tribes were nomadic and semi-nomadic groups. The basic unit was that of the family. Membership to the family was based on paternal descent. “However, for warfare or protection, and for making territorial claims, larger groups became functional: the clan, tribe, and the confederation” (1965: 63). Despite his revisions of the wave theory, Luke shared with previous models built upon the Bedouin analogy the understanding that tribal units are separate from the state and built upon nested patrilineal hierarchies. This conflated all ‘rural’ populations, whether mobile or sedentary, and made no room for structural differences between these societies.

In a series of articles published in the 1970s, M. B. Rowton continued to develop and popularize this reverse-wave paradigm. Referencing Lattimore (1962: 487), Rowton distinguished enclosed nomadism—a situation in which “pastoral land was encircled by urban settlement”—from external or excluded nomadism, where pastoral nomads inhabit frontier regions on the edges of states (1973a: 249). Understanding most of southwest Asia to be characterized by the former situation, Rowton shared Luke’s opinion that relations between tribes and states would have been characterized by a great degree of interaction and interdependence. Like Luke, Rowton understood tribes and states as distinct political units, and he described a number of ways in which these polities might be integrated with one another into what he termed ‘dimorphic’ societies.<sup>12</sup> He differed

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<sup>12</sup> He described these possibilities in terms of a scale where, on one end there are “large territorial state[s] in which tribal and dimorphic chiefdoms, through present, did not play an important role and were confined to certain areas, usually frontier regions,” (1973a: 203), whereas the other end of the scale is occupied by “small dimorphic state[s]” (1973a: 204). In the middle would be intermediates, for instance “territorial

from Luke, though, by positing a specific functional role for mobility in the maintenance of tribal polities. Although he admitted that sedentary individuals might be associated with the tribal polity, Rowton nonetheless maintained that the tribal polity could only persist as a result of at least some of its members periodically moving beyond the control of the state, while, at the same time, maintenance of an identification with the state was provided by periodic existence within its boundaries (1974: 28). Like Luke and others before him, Rowton was primarily concerned with the interaction between tribes and states and the resulting effect on the dimorphic polity. He did not investigate internal structural properties of the tribe, except to posit the necessity of mobility for the maintenance of a political identity independent from the state. At one point he did acknowledge that “the tribal system itself had a similarly autonomous pattern of tribes within a tribe” (1973b: 248), and he associated the tribe with a feeling of strong solidarity (1973b: 251), but he did not explore how tribal structures and structuring principles would have been affected by close interaction and interdependence between tribes and states.

Luke and Rowton’s research reflected a growing dissatisfaction with 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century tribal paradigms. These treatments were often built upon a modern Bedouin analogy, which anachronistically stressed mobility and independence and reflected popular, superficial notions of Bedouin as bellicose and especially hostile to sedentary, agricultural populations. Instead, Luke and Rowton were convinced that sheep-goat

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state[s] in which tribal and dimorphic chiefdoms played a dominant military and political role” (ibid). The example he cited of such intermediate societies from the ancient Near East is MBA Mari, where “the king functioned both as the head of a territorial state and as the chief...” (ibid). Rowton felt that the possibility of this type of dimorphic polity was under-appreciated by modern scholarship due to modernization in the Middle East, where recently the territorial state had emerged as the dominant political form, resulting from “the introduction of the breech-loading repeating rifle and the machine gun” (1973b: 247).

pastoralists in the ancient Near East would have been much less mobile and, as a result, would have had a more complicated relationship with sedentary political systems.<sup>13</sup> They were content to define a tribe as a polity consisting of individuals with shared interests that were in opposition to the interests of a central, urban authority. This opposition, though, was only secondarily related to mobility. Essentially, for Luke and Rowton, mobile pastoralists and sedentary agriculturalists were much less different from one another than they had been characterized by an earlier generation of scholars. The theoretical differences between these groups eroded in this period not only because of perceived differences in their material realities, but also because there was no perception of a structural difference between them. Tribe and state were simply opposing political formations, serving nearly identical political functions for their members, but nonetheless serving to distinguish those members to the degree to which tribe and state were, themselves, distinguished. At the individual level, then, tribe and state were matters of identity.

The further erosion of the distinction between mobile pastoral and sedentary populations in studies of the ancient Near East is clear in a popular article authored by Kathryn Kamp and Norman Yoffee (1980). There, these two authors identified and rejected “a salient tendency in the ethnographic literature... to dichotomize socioeconomic relations” between mobile pastoral and non-mobile populations (1980: 93). Although they departed from Luke and Rowton in this regard, this perspective is

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<sup>13</sup> As an alternative to the Bedouin model, for example, Luke cited the ‘Agêdât, a contemporary sheep-goat herding, ‘tribal’ group near the Euphrates in Syria. The mixed agricultural and pastoral subsistence strategies and seasonal transhumance of the ‘Agêdât, Luke maintained, “does not justify a radical contrast between sedentary and pastoral groups. Their pattern of existence rather is a vivid illustration of the necessity of pastoral and sedentary interdependence” (1965: 28-29). This of course begs the question of whether or not the ‘Agêdât, or any group, pastoral, nomadic, or both, can profitably be termed tribal and whether or not they do, indeed, constitute an acceptable analogy that is not similarly anachronistic.

really a logical consequence following from the fact that no structural differences were identified by those scholars to justify such a dichotomization. Kamp and Yoffee went on to criticize that scholarship by noting that

dyads like tribal/nontribal, peasant/nomad, rural/urban, desert/sown, civilized/uncivilized abound. The variability of these characteristics is large misapprehended in such a categorizing and homogenizing approach, as though the construction of a typology itself explained the interrelationships among phenomena (cf. Dyson-Hudson 1972).

Ibid.

They buttressed their impression by citing contemporary ethnographic accounts from the time, which seemed to indicate no significant dichotomy between such dyads. The situation was further confused by appeal to a definition of tribalism adopted from neo-evolutionary theorists (1980: 88-89).<sup>14</sup> Kamp and Yoffee understood that, at least in the case of the dyad of Amorite/non-Amorite in Middle Bronze Age (MBA) Levant, the most relevant dichotomy was one of ethnic identity.<sup>15</sup>

There is not presently a consensus on the sociopolitical characteristics that may be attributed to mobile pastoral societies in studies of the ancient Near East, let alone EBA Syria. The most sophisticated model offered to date, that of Anne Porter (2000; 2012), nevertheless continues the trend of rejecting a sociopolitical dichotomy between mobile pastoral and sedentary societies. Continuing the criticism that was identified in the work

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<sup>14</sup> The effect of neo-evolutionary theory on the connotation of 'tribe' is explored in the excursus following this chapter.

<sup>15</sup> They drew their definition of ethnicity from sociologists and anthropologists who, define an ethnic group as a number of individuals who see themselves 'as being alike by virtue of a common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others' (Shibutani and Kwan 1965: 47). By reference to a putative common origin and cultural heritage a set of ideologies is developed, not so much to prescribe solidarity, but to provide 'a set of ideas and symbols by reference to which a claim to solidarity (or opposition) may be made in inter-group and interpersonal relations' (Grillo 1974: 159)... Ethnicity is thus a very flexible category... Important in the analysis of ancient Western Asian social systems, the term 'ethnic group' allows for the existence of more than one type of social organization within the single bounded unit.

of Kamp and Yoffee, Porter has not only rejected the dichotomy between tribe and state, but has also criticized attempts to define tribalism “as a set of political structures, or as a set of social structures that operate in lieu of, or as if they were, political structures” (2012: 54). Instead, Porter defined tribe as a type of social organization (2000: 84), based on kinship, territorialism, and descent (2000: 53), which is independent of any other political and cultural characteristics (2000: 91). For Porter, who rejects segmentary lineage theory out of hand as “now largely discredited or abandoned in much of anthropology (Holy 1979a, 1979b, 1996; Kuper 1982; Marx 2006)” (2012: 49), tribalism is a social phenomenon attributable just as much to mobile pastoral as sedentary agricultural societies (2000: 50). Also like Kamp and Yoffee, above, Porter cited contemporary ethnographic work to argue that no significant social or political differences correlate with mobile pastoral groups or necessarily set them apart from sedentary agriculturalists (2012).

There has been a trend among scholars of the ancient Near East, then, to reject the idea of a dichotomy between sedentary and mobile societies, because the nature of this dichotomy has historically relied on anachronistic observations, and assumptions of ideological divisions that do not seem to be corroborated by ethnographic facts. As will be explained in this chapter, the ultimate source of dissatisfaction with a ‘tribal/nontribal’ dichotomy does not result from the falsity of such a dichotomy, but rather 1) the lack of a model that clearly elucidated the sociopolitical features relevant to such a dichotomy and 2) an historical perspective by which to contextualize ethnographic accounts of such societies. The development of such a model in this dissertation provides it with a unique perspective on mobile pastoralism in EBA Syria.



The use of the term ‘tribalism’ among scholars of the ancient Near East is presently a matter of some ambiguity, owing to the awkward development of the term and misunderstandings of the significance of the connection between mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems. In 1988 (51), Yoffee still chose to define tribalism as above, following an evolutionary line of reasoning. Although his call to abandon tribe for ethnic group, “which allows for the existence of more than one type of social and economic organization within the same bounded unit,” has largely been ignored, some have still championed his criticism of tribalism as applied to the Amorite phenomenon (e.g. Michalowski 1983). The use of the term ‘tribe’ to indicate the sociopolitical aspects of mobile pastoralism persists, though what exactly is meant by it is often times implicit and equivocal, and sometimes even explicitly equivocal (e.g. Fleming 2004a: 27). Despite the ambiguity of the term, treatments of tribalism that have appeared in ancient Near Eastern studies in the last thirty years have not changed considerably and have remained consistently multi-vocal. A broad survey of those treatments can be given here with reference to a representative sample of literature.

Generally, tribes are understood to be different from states (e.g. Szuchman 2009: 5). They are understood as discrete political units, whose interests are opposed to those of the state (e.g. Lemche 2000: 1198; Buccellati 2008; Fleming 2009: 236; but see also Porter 2012: 38), but often tribes are also understood to be part of a dimorphic society along with the state (Rowton, 1973a, b, etc.; Postgate 1992: 84; Steinkeller 1996: 307-8; Buccellati 2008; Fleming 2009: 236). The tribal portion of that dimorphic society is sometimes understood as either the rural component of society (Rosen 2002: 24), as a society on the edges of, or just beyond the state (Postgate 1992: 84), or sometimes both

(Buccellati 2008). The tribe may also be the dominant polity within a dimorphic society composed of tribal and non-tribal populations (Rowton etc.; Alizadeh 2009; Fleming 2009: 236).

Tribes are sometimes understood to be political units that are decentralized, egalitarian, or corporate in nature (Lemche 2000: 1199; Fleming 2004a: 24; Cooper 2006, esp. 271-2). Some scholars understand tribal societies to be a secondary phenomenon of the state, either arising from economic demand or political consequence (Buccellati 2008; Khazanov 2009), while others seem to assume that tribes could transform into states, whether they employ evolutionary points of view or not (Lemche 2000: 1199; Gibson et al. 2002: 60; Levy 2009). This might involve the transformation of a 'sheikh' into a king (Gibson et al. 2002: 60), for instance, a feature that some have suggested explains the nature of kingship in northern Mesopotamia (e.g. Renger 1995: 283). Some understand tribal societies to be characterized by a great deal of plasticity in terms of their political organization, which is characterized historically by a pattern of oscillation between egalitarianism and exclusionary political hierarchies, either implicitly (Buccellati 2008), or explicitly, and sometimes associated with the phenomenon of segmentation (Levy 2009). This oscillation is sometimes also associated with a change between sedentary and non-sedentary practices (Lemche 2000: 1199).

However they define tribe, many authors associate it with mobility either implicitly (Postgate 1992: 82; Alizadeh 2009; Levy 2009), or explicitly as a result of pastoral subsistence strategies (Rosen 2002; Cooper 2008: 225; Lyonnet 2009). Though some maintain a special connection between tribalism and mobility (e.g. Rowton 1973a), and note that it is confined to mobile groups (Postgate 1992: 82; Buccellati 2008), still others

seem to indicate their belief that there is no special connection between mobility and tribalism (Fleming 2009; Kamp and Yoffee 1980; Porter 2000, 2012). Some believe the dimorphic nature of society to be a result of the economic interdependence of mobile, pastoral, tribal and sedentary, agricultural, state societies, or at least the dependence of the former on the latter, a point stressed by both Luke (1965) and Rowton (1973a, 1973b, 1974, 1981). Others have rightly pointed out that mobile pastoral people are multi-resource based (Rosen 2002: 23).

There is most widespread agreement on the point that tribes are constituted by kinship, though exactly how is a matter of disagreement. Some scholars wish to go no further than to say simply that tribalism is ambiguously kin-based (Michalowski 1983: 243, 245; Lemche 2000: 1199; Fleming 2004a: 24, 27-28, 30-31). A few scholars detect a tendency towards the construction of kin groups on the basis of unilinear descent, either in truth or as an ideological fiction (Anbar 1991: 77; Postgate 1992: 82, 85). Often, this kin-base, whether it is specifically unilinear or not, is explicitly or implicitly justified by the fact that tribes are not thought to have a territorial basis, and so would have no other way of relating to one another as a social unit (Postgate 1992: 85, 270; Buccellati 2008; van der Steen 2009: 105; Wossink 2009: 126).

Much confusion has originated from the relationship between tribalism and segmentary lineage systems. This confusion has not been limited to the ancient Near East. Most scholars have dropped segmentary lineage theory as it was explained by Evans-Pritchard (1940)<sup>16</sup>, in favor of a more general principle of segmentation as it is

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<sup>16</sup> Though certainly not invented by him, contra Levy 2009: 158, as the following discussion will demonstrate.

explained by Parkinson (2002), as will be discussed below (Levy 2009: 158; Szuchman 2009: 4; van der Steen 2009: 105; Wossink 2009: 126).

In general, then, there has been a tendency among scholars of the ancient Near East to associate ‘tribalism’ with kinship, mobility, pastoralism, with some distance and distinction from the state (either geographically, politically, or both), and to characterize it by some degree of equality, though with potential for inequality. Agreement on these points is by no means unanimous, and consensus on any more specific features of tribalism is lacking. The reasons for this multi-vocality can be related to the use and abuse of the term tribalism over the last few centuries, a general lack of engagement with the primary anthropological literature, a tendency to define tribalism in reference to its relationship with state societies, and a disregard for the structural significance of the rapidly changing nature of relevant, ethnohistorically-attested populations from the Middle East. In most cases, ethnographic research, when it is cited at all in defining the features of tribalism, is employed only superficially. This is problematic because the anthropological literature concerning mobile pastoralism is extensive and complex. This feature, though, may explain the reticence to engage with it deeply.

It is necessary, then, before attempting to empirically demonstrate the relationship between mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems and explain the logic of that relationship, to review how the accumulation of connotations in the word tribe have served to undermine and obscure that relationship in the scholarly literature. Adopting “the words ‘tribe’ and ‘tribal,’ with all of their pitfalls, to take advantage of their familiarity and wide use” as Fleming advocated (2004a: 27) threatens to confer upon the terms the ambiguities and misunderstandings of ancient society resulting from our own

modern attempts at interpretation, which do not necessarily correlate with any empirically existing ‘tribal’ phenomenon, thereby undermining the usefulness of the term to the historian and the anthropologist altogether. To this end, the remainder of this chapter will focus on the use of the terms ‘tribe’ and ‘tribalism’ and trace their development from their earliest attestations through to the beginning of the 21st century. This review will demonstrate that much of the confusion regarding the structural significance of segmentary lineage systems results from its complicated relationship with the terms ‘tribe’ and ‘tribalism’ and the disjuncture between the discursive models and actual behaviors of ethnohistorically-attested populations in the modern Middle East. First, though, the basic model of segmentary lineage systems will be presented to help orient the reader for the foregoing historical review.

### **Segmentary Lineage Systems**

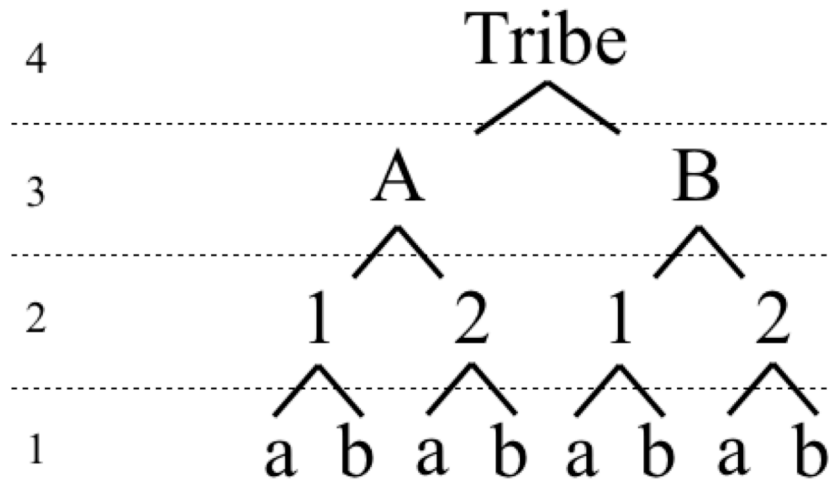
Segmentary lineage systems are defined by a constellation of structuring principles that provide context for, and inform, human interaction. One primary feature of a segmentary lineage systems is a unilineal descent system<sup>17</sup>, divided up into any number of hierarchically-organized nested segments.<sup>18</sup> In this case, hierarchy refers only to the level of genetic abstraction by which groups are defined, from the most general level down to the most specific, individual level. This system is illustrated in figure 2.2. It is also possible to diagram this relationship with reference to the individual, ‘from the ground up’ so to speak, as in figure 2.3. Thus, membership in a segmentary lineage

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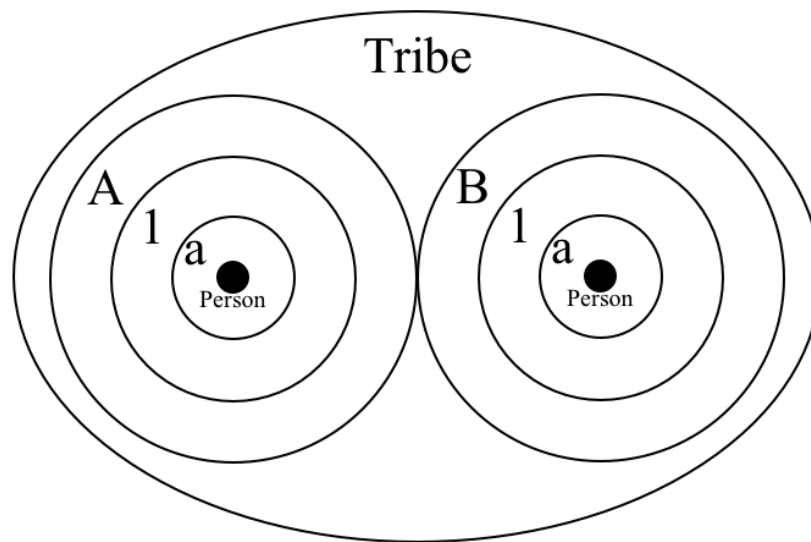
<sup>17</sup> Among contemporary Middle Eastern tribal societies examined in the following chapter, this structuring principle is exclusively patrilineal.

<sup>18</sup> In this sense all tribes are segmentary, though I prefer to reserve the term segmentation for a more general application, contra Dresch 1986.

system, and one's place in the segmentary hierarchy, is conferred by birth and is never ambiguous.<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 2.2. The structure of segmentary lineage systems**



**Figure 2.3. Personal distance model of segmentary lineage systems<sup>20</sup>**

<sup>19</sup> A logical consequence of this point is that the borders of a segmentary lineage society are clearly defined. The boundaries of segmentary lineage systems constitute the boundaries of sociopolitical units.

<sup>20</sup> Following Dresch 1986: 315, figure 2.

A second primary feature of segmentary lineage systems is that they operate on a political principle often referred to as “balanced opposition”. Balanced opposition describes the moral obligation of members of a segment, at whatever level of abstraction, to defend the interests of their lineage mates against those of segments that are more distantly related. This relationship is well-encapsulated by “the hoary saying of the Arab” (Salzman 1978a: 53): “I against my brother; I and my brother against my cousin; I and my brother and my cousin against the world.” This support to opposition can take any form but is most apparent in cases of murder between segments. For instance, individuals in the same primary segment are obligated to protect their fellow lineage mates against those members of other lineages on the same structural level. In a dispute, then, between an individual of primary segment A1a and an individual of primary segment A1b (with reference to figures 2.2 and 2.3), only the members of those lineages are implicated to have an obligation to the dispute.<sup>21</sup> In the case of a dispute between members of A1a and A2a, the dispute operates on the level of secondary segments and so A1b and A2b are also implicated. Likewise, a dispute between A1a and B1a would have implications for all segments belonging to those tertiary segmentary levels. It is important to appreciate that this structuring principle does not necessitate any specific response on the part of any particular individual.<sup>22</sup> Rather, balanced opposition provides a moral context, and in that way a structuring principle (e.g. Irons 1975: 114; Dresch 1986). The structural logic of this principle is that it serves to maintain a legal equality between all segments. It has the

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<sup>21</sup> Theoretical collateral primary segments of A1 would have no morally mandated interest, though they might have a practical interest in promoting peace between collateral segments in order to promote solidarity and strength against outside segments such as A2. In fact, some ethnographers report the moral duty of such segments to be explicitly to seek the peace (e.g. Irons 1975).

<sup>22</sup> One of Peters’ errors, discussed below, was in assuming that this general principle was a hard and fast law, and that the failure of secondary and tertiary segments to coalesce as warring parties was proof that the indigenous model of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica was not an accurate sociological model.

additional function of undermining relationships of inequality that might lead to the development of a structuring principle legitimizing inequality.

Essentially, then, this system can also be described as operating on an egalitarian political principle, though the structuring principle is somewhat more nuanced than this: it is in the best interest of every individual to preserve the legal equality of each segment to which he is a member relative to each structurally equivalent opposed segment.<sup>23</sup> Each segment can understand its position of equality to be somewhat precarious as a result of certain threats to its honor perpetrated by other segments of the same level of abstraction. To preserve their equal standing, they must then exercise their legal rights, including rights of vengeance, to demonstrate their strength and gain respect for their honor. To the extent that these offending segments belong to different secondary or tertiary units, collateral units also feel an insult to collective honor and are galvanized to defend their honor and their legal equality in the segmentary lineage system.<sup>24</sup>

For interrelated reasons, which were alluded to above, and which will form the focus on the rest of this chapter, the features of this model of segmentary lineage systems have struggled to find application outside of the ethnography of Middle Eastern and North African mobile pastoral societies. To understand why, it is necessary to review the history of the relationship of these features of segmentary lineage systems with the history of connotations accumulating to the term ‘tribe’ in western scholarship.

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<sup>23</sup> This does not, however, mean to imply that the individual segments are uninterested in promoting their own rights ahead of those which are politically and militarily weaker. Many have suggested that the moral imperative behind balanced opposition in segmentary lineage societies in the contemporary Middle East can be understood as ‘honor’ (e.g. Jamous 1981; Dresch 1986; Eickelman 2002; Salzman 2008).

<sup>24</sup> To some extent then, the variability in responses among collateral segments can be a result of how strongly their collective honor is challenged by a dispute between structurally closer and more distant primary segments and how strongly their material interests are actually reflected by the moral system. It is proposed, below, that such a disjunction between morality and material interests characterized the situation of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica as described by Peters (1967).



## Segmentary Lineage Systems and ‘Tribe’: A History

### *Etymology of Tribe*

The earliest source of the English word ‘tribe’ is from Latin *tribu*, which was used to translate *phylon* (φῦλή) from the Septuagint (Oxford English Dictionary Online).<sup>25</sup> There, *phylon* was often used to translate three different words. Most commonly *mišpahah* (מִשְׁפָּחָה)—‘family’—was translated this way, but also *matteh* (מַטֵּה) and *šebet* (שֵׁבֶט), with similar meanings of ‘branch, staff, or rod’, whenever they were used metaphorically to indicate a lineage-based group. The force of *matteh* and *šebet*, in this metaphorical use, can be both to emphasize a dendritic pattern of expanding descent and to emphasize group solidarity and continuity through relation to a specific ancestor. This metaphor fits well with many instances in the Old Testament where individuals and families are organized socially and politically on the basis of their patrilineal descent.<sup>26</sup> This form of sociopolitical organization found in the Old Testament, coupled with its associated focus on mobile pastoral subsistence strategies and its antagonistic relationships with sedentary societies, formed the initial basis for the English use of the word tribe.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205725>

<sup>26</sup> The twelve tribes of Israel are themselves each understood to have been patrilineal groups, descended from one of the twelve sons of Jacob.

<sup>27</sup> Tribe also carried further connotations drawn from the Old Testament, including those associated with Abraham that have been identified by Hazony (2012: 112): generosity, hospitality, and familial solidarity. Greek *phylon* itself shared some of the meaning of all of these biblical terms. In Greek it could be used to refer to a group of people on the basis of gender, nationality, and ethnicity, but especially descent. Etymologically, it derives from *phyo* (φύω), meaning ‘to produce, generate, beget’ (Liddell and Scott 1968: 1961). A *phylon* could be further subdivided into *phratres* (φράτρες) and *genos* (γένος) (Liddell and Scott 1968: 344, 1953). It thus carried a segmentary connotation to its use in the biblical translations and was a literal alternative to the dendritic Hebrew metaphorical terms for patrilineal descent groups. The word *tribu* appears in Latin translations of Greek translations of the Hebrew Old Testament simply as a corollary of *phylon*, which signified a group of people, organized into sociopolitical units on the basis of unilinear segmentation. *Tribu*, in its original Latin form, had a different meaning. In ancient Rome, the term referred to voting blocks into which all of the citizens of Rome were organized (Glare 1996: 1972). It can

### *Progressivism and Cultural Evolutionism*

Scholarly treatments of ‘tribe’ as a sociological phenomenon, beginning in the Age of Enlightenment, were built upon interpretations of societies in the Old Testament, where tribalism was associated with a pastoral subsistence strategy and a kin-based sociopolitical structure. It was also at this time that tribalism was first understood to have been a common stage in a universal progression of sociopolitical types precedent to the development of agriculture and government. Progressivist sociological thinking at this time was characterized by two assumptions. First, the social and cultural features of tribalism were thought to derive from its mode of subsistence. Second, other human societies practicing this mode of subsistence were thought to be equally representative of this stage of sociocultural development. Through the study of these living cultural ‘fossils’, then, it was assumed that a cultural ontogeny could be reconstructed. There were two important developments for tribalism coming out of this period: first, the association of the term with a connotation of primitiveness and second, a confusion over what sociocultural features were specifically associated with tribalism, and essential to its definition, as opposed to other stages and subdivisions of stages of cultural evolution. As a result, the term lost its specific connotation of mobile pastoralism, but nonetheless preserved some features of segmentary lineage systems abstracted and projected onto wholly different societies.

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be hypothesized that *tribu* is of Indo-European origin, traced back to two roots: *tri*, meaning three, and *bhu*, ‘to be’. A Roman folk etymology has been constructed through reference to the three traditional political divisions of the early population of Rome, but the apocryphal nature of this story casts doubt on the etymology. In any case, the original Latin meaning should not cloud any etymological analysis of tribe in its English use. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the original Latin meaning of *tribu*, as political divisions of Roman society, seems to have been introduced into English only in the sixteenth century, at least two centuries after its adoption from biblical sources (‘Tribe’ in the Oxford English Dictionary online at <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205725>).

The earliest prominent scholarly treatment of tribe as a distinct sociopolitical phenomenon is that of the Marquis de Condorcet. In his *Esquisse D'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*, the Marquis de Condorcet divided all of human history into ten periods, identifying the second as a pastoral period and drawing a number of inferences about pastoral societies on the basis of their subsistence strategy. Many of the features that Condorcet posited for pastoral society are parallel to pre-Monarchic society in the Old Testament, and suggest that his understanding of this stage was largely informed by these biblical sources. For instance, Condorcet described pastoral societies as nations, organized into groups of families called tribes<sup>28</sup>. These nations and their constituent tribes were led by chiefs, distinguished by their wealth and popular respect for their authority. Pastoral concerns resulted in increased mobility within tribes, and/or increased distance between tribes, compared to the groups of individuals in the first epoch. These tribal divisions themselves owed their existence to concern for the control of pasturage. The chiefs that led these nations and tribes established and modified natural law. Hospitality was an important social duty. Condorcet also associated the rise of organized religion, and priestly classes, with this period of human development (1795: 31-33). Finally, the very fact that this stage of Condorcet's model of social development preceded that of agriculture and the state (1795: 35-38) is echoed in the biblical history of Israel first as a tribe in the Patriarchal Age, then as a nation of tribes under the informal leadership of the judges, then later as a

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<sup>28</sup> Condorcet distinguished between tribe (*tribu*) which constitutes this stage and *peuplades*, sometimes translated 'tribes' (e.g. Barraclough 1955: 14), which actually corresponds to his earliest stage of society. *Peuplades* is perhaps better translated as hordes or even bands, in comparison with later evolutionary and neo-evolutionary systems, while only *tribu* carries with it the connotations discussed above. Barraclough's translation reflects the confusion of the term in the modern era and the present disconnection with its original biblical etymology.

state ruled by a king. Although the Marquis de Condorcet never explicitly cited any sources of information for his characterization of pastoral society, it seems clear that this stage was influenced by knowledge of the books of the Old Testament. His use of the word *tribu* is entirely consistent with Greek *phylon* in the Septuagint. Despite this reiteration of this meaning of tribe, Condorcet's model actually demonstrates an additional, developing connotation of the word. It was still a type of sociopolitical organization, but now also characteristic of a universal stage of human society, its features largely derivative from its subsistence technology. It was not a different form of society as much as it was an historically precedent form, technologically and culturally primitive.

The progressive approach taken by the Marquis de Condorcet in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century ultimately led to the evolutionary treatment of human society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as reflected in the unilinear schemes of the earliest cultural evolutionists.<sup>29</sup> The primary distinction between their research and that which came before is the use of a growing body of ethnographic material from contemporary societies throughout the world. These evolutionists expanded the scope of the meaning of the word tribe to all pre-state societies. Because of this concentration on new, contemporary ethnographic data, 'tribe' lost much of its specific biblical meaning, retaining only general associations with kinship and sociopolitical segmentation.

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<sup>29</sup> This orientation is reflected well by one of the most prominent evolutionists of the day, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor,

...the institutions of man are as distinctly stratified as the earth on which he lives. They succeed each other in series substantially uniform over the globe, independent of what seem the comparatively superficial differences of race and language, but shaped by similar human nature acting, through successively changed conditions in savage, barbaric, and civilised life.

1889: 269

The most influential of these evolutionists was the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan. His ethnographic work among the Iroquois inspired him to publish a unilinear model of human social evolution in 1877. Morgan made a number of divisions in his human cultural ontogeny, reflective of a growing body of ethnographic data. The most fundamental distinction he drew was between civilization, ‘*civitas*’, and the pre-civilization stages of savagery and barbarism, ‘*societas*’. As he defined them, *societas* characterized the ancient human condition, where human groups were formed and regulated on the basis of kinship, i.e. “gentes, phatries and tribes”, whereas *civitas* described the modern condition, in which relations between individuals were constructed territorially, i.e. “the township, the county, the state” (1877: 62). Morgan’s division of ancient and modern societies into the “fundamentally different” (ibid) types, *societas* and *civitas*, was not unprecedented. In 1861, Sir Henry James Sumner Maine published his career-making history of jurisprudence, *Ancient Law*, in which he, too, ordered societies into a developmental sequence divided between those characterized by corporate, family relations, which he named ‘Status’ societies and those which were based upon formal, modern, governmental law, which he named ‘Contract’ societies (1861: 168-70). Although he made reference to the fact that some of the ancient kin-based forms of jurisprudence still persisted in contemporary societies (1861: 120), Maine’s analysis in *Ancient Law* was purely historical and limited to ancient Rome, Greece and the Bible.<sup>30</sup> His evolutionary assumptions, and his conviction of the inherent “stability of human

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<sup>30</sup> This latter source he need not attempt to depict with any minuteness, both because [it is] familiar to most of us from our earliest childhood, and because, from the interest once attaching to the controversy which takes its name from the debate between Locke and Filmer, [it fills] a whole chapter, though not a very profitable one, in English literature.

nature” (1861: 116) led him to treat classical and biblical jurisprudence together on the basis of their foundation in patrilineal kinship, and implicitly with a certain stage in every primitive human society.<sup>31</sup> Adopting the same premises, and the fundamental distinction between ancient and modern, Morgan populated his model with many ethnographic and historical examples. Foremost among these were the Iroquois, but he also included discussions of other Native Americans as well as African, Aboriginal Australian, and Asian societies. In doing so, he transformed Maine’s historical model into one which was explicitly ethnographic. He transformed Contract and Status, modern and ancient, into *civitas* and *societas*, which is to say, civilized and tribal (ergo primitive).<sup>32</sup> Such a use dissociated ‘tribe’ from many of its specific biblical connotations, such as those reflected in the model of the Marquis de Condorcet, i.e. mobility, pastoralism, and patrilineal segmentation. In addition to its evolutionary connotations, tribe at this time was becoming synonymous with any kind of pre-modern, technologically less developed society.

In part, Morgan’s use of the term tribe only reflects its developing meaning at the time, but it also served to popularize this use as a result of his influence in the social sciences. One such avenue of influence was through Marx and Engels. Morgan’s distinction between savagery and barbarism was largely based upon a single

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<sup>31</sup> In a later work, Maine actually limited the characterization of those societies in *Ancient Law* to his “tribal genealogical” type of archaic society, which was attributed exclusively “to the Aryan, Semitic, and Uralic races,” from “that large part of the human race which cannot be classed as Aryan, Semitic, or Uralian,” (1875: 66), which was instead based on a contradictory principle of consanguinity. In so doing, he extended his model into European history and identified evidence for its evolution into territorially based political societies in many places there. For an opinion in support of this connection, see Bacon (1958: 135-64). In the same work, Maine cited Morgan’s opinion that the tribal genealogical type grew out of a more archaic society governed by a more generalized notion of consanguinity, in the fashion of a unilinear evolutionary model. Maine, however, remained unconvinced (1875: 68-70). Nevertheless, his work would serve as a springboard for Morgan’s own popularity.

<sup>32</sup> This is reflected in the use of the term tribe in his model, where it has both the specific meaning of the largest culturally and politically homogenous unit of an ‘ancient’ (primitive, kin-based) society, and is then used to describe any non-modern, primitive human group, whether ancient or contemporary.

technological distinction relating to subsistence: those societies in a state of savagery simply gathered local subsistence resources, while barbarous societies possessed domesticated plants and animals.<sup>33</sup> Civilizations were distinguished from barbarous societies on the basis of writing. This technological determinism was already characteristic of the Marquis de Condorcet's own model, but Morgan's expanded use of ethnographic data to support his model gave it more scientific appeal.<sup>34</sup> This technologically deterministic model appealed readily to Marx and Engels' historical materialism. Already in 1846, Marx and Engels had written *The German Ideology*.<sup>35</sup> There, they briefly presented a series of stages of social development on the basis of relations of production, or as they termed it, *eigentum*—ownership (1986: 44). The first of these stages of *eigentum* was referred to as *Stammeigentum*. *Stamm* in this context is to be translated as 'tribe'.<sup>36</sup> Marx and Engels characterized this stage as one where subsistence was met by hunting and gathering, pastoralism, and, in the latter part of the stage, early agriculture. Ownership of property was communal and the division of labor was based upon family relations. The development of cities and states, and more individualized ownership of property would come only in the congregation of several

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<sup>33</sup> Technically, Morgan would himself fix the presence of ceramic technology as "probably the most effective and conclusive test that can be selected to fix a boundary line" between them (1877: 10), hence the lowest status of barbarism actually precedes the domestication of plants and animals.

<sup>34</sup> Although Morgan was careful to avoid the claim that his categories were subsistence-based, the earlier phases are clearly technologically determined by the criteria he outlined. This difficulty was just one problem Morgan had relating to the fact that the ethnographic data at his disposal did not actually fit so well into a unilinear model of human social evolution.

<sup>35</sup> Marx discovered Morgan's *Ancient Society* and was apparently inspired by the work, but was unable to publish anything about it before his death. Engels found Marx's notes and expanded them into a book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* which was published in 1884 (Leacock 1972: 7). The book was essentially Marx and Engels' adaptation of the prehistoric phases of Morgan's model into their own materialist historical paradigm, written after Marx's death, but published forty-eight years before the historical materialist sketch of human history in *The German Ideology*. At the time, the word itself, literally meaning 'trunk', also carried the specific meaning of a group of people descended from a common ancestor.

<sup>36</sup> In his extensive translations of Morgan's model in the book, Engels used *Stamm* for tribe, adopting Morgan's use of the term and establishing a lexical equivalence between the two words.

*Stämme* into larger political units in the second stage of their model. Although they drew the boundaries between the stages differently, Marx and Engels seem to have independently come to a conclusion similar to that of Maine and Morgan about the development of human society: the earliest, pre-state phases were universally characterized by familial relations and those groups, because there were so unified, were referred to as *Stämme*—tribes. This served to further obscure the original relationship between that term and mobile pastoralism and the difference between mobile pastoralism and sedentary agriculturalism.

This developing use of tribe to refer to primitive, culturally homogenous ethnographic units of study, and the expansion of its meaning to encapsulate different kinds of societies and, hence, the obfuscation of any unique character of mobile pastoralism, is further reflected in, and propagated by, the work of Émile Durkheim. In his landmark dissertation, *De la Division du Travail Sociale*<sup>37</sup>, Durkheim took up the division of human society into two fundamentally different types on the basis of their legal divisions, as postulated by Maine, and attempted to explain these legal differences through a difference in the relations of production.<sup>38</sup> Ancient and primitive contemporary societies, which conform to Maine's 'Status' and Morgan's *societas*, are understood as coalescing as a result of both external circumstances and an internal similarity (1893: 193, citing Waitz 1859: 350), a situation Durkheim referred to as mechanical solidarity. Durkheim proposed that this state of mechanical solidarity can eventually be replaced by

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<sup>37</sup> Durkheim was clearly influenced to a great degree by Maine and Morgan, both of whom he refers to throughout the work. The influence of Marxism and historical materialism is evident in the very title of his book.

<sup>38</sup> This was all also couched in terms of social solidarity, as Durkheim was concerned to show how the two different kinds of societies could be held together into cultural units without breaking apart due to centrifugal social tension.



modern, organic societies which demonstrate enough internal differentiation and interdependence of labor to maintain a high degree of heterogeneity and where the politico-familial unit eventually falls away to be replaced by a state society (1893: 201-202). In Durkheim's writing, societies exhibiting mechanical solidarity are all referred to as *tribu*, following the usage of tribe evident in the writing of Morgan. Thus, although the Hebrew society of the Old Testament appears throughout Durkheim's work as an example of a society exhibiting mechanical solidarity (though admittedly nearer the boundary of modernity than most), Morgan's Iroquois and other ethnographic examples are treated together with it.<sup>39</sup> The phenomenon of segmentation shared by these societies is assumed at all times to be based on kinship, being undermined by territorial segmentation only when the transition to more organic societies is made through increasing internal labor differentiation (1893: 204-5). Durkheim is an example of what was happening in the social sciences throughout the West in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dispersal of historical materialism, the acceptance of a fundamental distinction between ancient and modern societies, especially from the writings of Maine and Morgan, the assumption that ancient and contemporary societies could be arranged on a unilinear scale of social evolution, and the use of the word tribe to describe all of these ancient and

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<sup>39</sup> Though he cited the Hebrews and Iroquois together, Durkheim did note an important structural distinction between the two. But because of the lack of differentiation due to occupation in these societies, these segments are all essentially identical in being based on kinship relations, and are classifiable as politico-familial units (1893: 190-191). Nevertheless, the ways in which this segmentation is expressed can vary. For the Hebrews, there existed a nested hierarchy of kinship segments, a characterization that agrees well with the biblical sources, while the Iroquois, instead, were more simply and linearly divided "analogues aux anneaux de l'anneau" (ibid). In simpler forms, the simplest of which he identified among populations of Australian aborigines, society is only divided into two such segments (1893: 190), later to be named moieties. In his evolutionary orientation, Durkheim postulated also that there must at one time have existed a society without any internal division at all, *l'Horde*, which he described as the "le vrai protoplasme social" (1893: 189).

contemporary primitive societies from its original reference to the segmentary divisions of Hebrew tribes in the Old Testament.

Although this early period of evolutionism tended to obscure the differences between mobile pastoral and other ‘primitive’ or ‘ancient’ types of societies, there was nevertheless concern with specific sociopolitical features of mobile pastoral societies, and an interest in accounting for their specific position in the history of sociopolitical evolution. Nevertheless, a strict evolutionary perspective still served to obscure the structural significance of segmentary lineage structures. For instance, the Scottish orientalist Robertson Smith sought to provide an evolutionary model of “the genesis of the system of male kinship, with the corresponding laws of marriage and tribal organisation, which prevailed in Arabia at the time of Mohammed...” (1885: v-vi). He did this through close analysis of a number of historical sources dating to just a few generations after the prophet. The picture of Arab society that he drew from these sources is largely comparable to that of the discussion of *tribu* by the Marquis de Condorcet. These features included an emphasis on tribal groups as sociopolitical units formed on a basis of patrilineal descent (1885: 1, 21-22), which could be confederated into a nation (1885: 2), the presence of a tribal chief whose position was maintained through popular opinion, certain corollaries of a mobile pastoral subsistence strategy including the collective holding of land and water usufruct rights and a strong emphasis on hospitality (1885: 39-41).<sup>40</sup> The sociopolitical system of Arab society that he saw through his sources “at the time when Mohammed announced his prophetic mission” (1885: 1), was set out immediately by Robertson Smith:

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<sup>40</sup> Robertson Smith detailed the kinship basis of Arab society in a way which not only characterized Hebrew society of the Old Testament, but also prefigured discussions from ethnographers of the modern Middle East, which will be treated later in this and the next chapter.

the Arabs throughout the peninsula formed a multitude of local groups held together within themselves not by any elaborate political organisation but by a traditional sentiment of unity, which they believed or feigned to be a unity of blood, and by the recognition and exercise of certain mutual obligations and social duties and rights, which united all the members of the same group to one another as against all other groups and their members.

Ibid.

Robertson Smith postulated that these local groups, becoming widely dispersed with the spread of Islam, came to be defined purely on the basis of patrilineal kinship to the Arab genealogists of the 8<sup>th</sup> century:

According to the theory of the Arab genealogists the groups were all patriarchal tribes, formed, by the subdivision of an original stock, on the system of kinship through male descents. A tribe was but a larger family... In process of time it broke up into two or more tribes, each embracing the descendants of one of the great ancestor's sons and taking its name from him... As time rolls on the sons of a household become heads of separate families, the families grow into septs, and finally the septs become great tribes or even nations embracing several tribes.

1885: 3-4

The members of each individual tribe conceived of themselves as sharing common interests. Robertson Smith identified one of these interests as a common defense, and as being evident in the blood-feud, whereby each kindred unit acted together in common interest, including in a punitive fashion against any other kindred which had killed one of their members (1885: 21-24).

The resemblance between the pre- and early Islamic Arab society he described and that of the Hebrew Old Testament was clearly not lost on Robertson Smith, himself a minister in the Free Church of Scotland. At one point he commented that the kin group unit known in both Hebrew and Arabic “affords a strong presumption that the group founded on the unity of blood is a most ancient feature in Semitic society,” (1885: 40) and elsewhere he noted that the tribal system as recorded by the 8<sup>th</sup> century genealogists reflected their understanding of reality and was “no mere idea borrowed from the Jews”

(1885: 22). But his unilinear evolutionary perspective, and that of his contemporaries, obscured the larger importance of this connection and its relationship to mobile pastoralism. Instead, Robertson Smith was concerned with documenting a hypothetical development of the Arabian system of patrilineal groups from an originally matrilineal situation through an intermediary stage of polyandry, as predicted by unilinear evolutionary models of the time. To Robertson Smith and the other social evolutionists, the type of patrilineal kin organization known from both the Old Testament as well as Arabia was not unique. It was simply one stage of sociopolitical evolution, in a universal progression of stages, that could be called 'tribal'. Nothing was made of this "most ancient feature" of "Semitic society," (1885: 40) because it was, ultimately, a feature thought to characterize all human societies that had already progressed beyond it.<sup>41</sup>

The cultural evolutionists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although differentiating the specific aspects of Middle and Near Eastern types of society with other pre-state forms, nevertheless conflated all pre- and non-state 'primitive' societies in their assumption of a universal, unilinear model of cultural evolution. Their error was more than a terminological one, as by broadening the use of the term tribalism they set it upon specious foundations. These foundations would be undermined in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, divorcing the term from most of its initial meaning though preserving its use as a convenient shorthand, ultimately sapping both 'tribalism' and mobile pastoralism of any specific structural significance.

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<sup>41</sup> In fact, it will be argued here that it was a unique and durable type of human society in the modern and ancient Near East.

### *The Empirical Revision*

Because the early evolutionary models—though largely inferential and speculative—were based upon real ethnographic observations, they were eminently testable through the accumulation of reliable ethnographic data. Just a generation after the initial publication of Morgan's *Ancient Society*, more American anthropologists, with a much wider ethnographic database encompassing most of the native societies of North America north of Mexico, did test these models. Not only did they find fault in the specific reconstructions of the phases of social development and the constellation of specific cultural features in these phases, they found enough evidence to reject outright the very premise of unilinear cultural evolutionism and, along with this rejection, the use of the term tribe was transformed and further divorced from connotations of mobility, pastoralism, and segmentary kinship systems.

The first shot in the empirical salvo fired at Morgan's unilinear evolutionary scheme concerned the hypothesized archaicism of the matrilineal, exogamous kin group (Swanton 1905). In Swanton's estimation of the material, this hypothesis was simply false. In fact, the opposite appeared more to be the case (1906: 172). Swanton's attack was not simply on the order of a hypothetical evolutionary trajectory, rather he intended his attack "as a protest against the assumption that a division of society into sharply marked totemic bodies with descent in either direction was necessarily or even probably its primitive status" (1906: 177). A systematic and exhaustive study of this 'totemism' was undertaken by Goldenweiser in 1910. In his study, Goldenweiser found no evidence for a clear pattern of coordination among any cultural traits which were presumed by the evolutionary models and rejected them completely (1910: 266). Instead, in the view of

these early 20<sup>th</sup> century empiricists, reality was far more complex and historically (and ecologically) contingent (i.e. 1910: 266-267).

Morgan's system was simply not supported by the facts. Lowie offered a convenient summary of this repudiation:

1. Kinship groups tracing descent unilaterally are not found universally among primitive tribes.
2. It is not proved that the North American gentes developed out of clans.
3. Restrictions of marriage are not primarily determined by unilateral kinship groups...
4. The exogamous kinship group did not form the sole foundation of the social fabric among primitive tribes, where quite different units... occur, often coexisting with the clan or gens.
5. The kinship group is a phenomenon of variable significance.

Lowie 1914: 93

There seemed to be no societies that could simply be categorized on the grounds of a maternal or paternal kinship system which governed any predictable aspect of social behavior, such as marriage rules. There could be many different social organizations within a society, with many different functions and these might even overlap. Instead, the empiricists argued “that various types of social units may peaceably coexist in the same tribe... In short, instead of the dull uniformity of the theorists, we may have all the motley variety of real life with its profusion of individual differences” (1914: 87).

This rejection of the preceding evolutionary models, and their psychological reasoning, indicated that the question of how social systems were organized, what role kinship did play, and how individual histories and ecological conditions influenced that organization, was a newly re-opened question, or at least one that was never really settled. In terms of social organization, the primacy of kinship in dictating social behavior amongst societies of ethnographic study was itself questioned. Territoriality, or cohabitation of unrelated individuals, was recognized to play as much if not more of a

role in some societies. According to Goldenweiser, “The significance of territorial units in primitive life has certainly been underestimated” (1910: 431). Even among the Iroquois, for example, though the family group was clearly important, “the local group remains a prominent factor in the life of the people” (ibid). From that point on, kinship and territoriality would both be considered together as structuring social behavior. This was, if not the birth, then at least the conception of descent theory, or lineage theory—a topic which would color much of the conversation of the British functionalists, especially in the post-war years when it would lead back to the Middle East, to tangle up the concept of tribe once again with the phenomenon of unilinear segmentary kin structures.

In this period, tribe was stripped of its earlier connotation of unilinear kin groups, the only real surviving characteristic of its biblical meaning. The validity of such groups as paramount structuring features of social interaction in any society was itself questioned. For these empiricists, tribe was simply a convenient way to refer to a unit of ethnographic study, a group relatively homogenous in cultural terms, distinct from other groups, and characterized also by at least its technological inferiority to modern, western states. Those ‘tribes’ mixed together both kinship and territorial considerations to structure the divisions of their society.

### *Structural Functionalism*

The empirical rejection of 19<sup>th</sup> century evolutionism that came out of the United States left anthropologists with the impression that two fundamental foundations of human society provided the means by which groups were divided into different units and how these units related to one another. These foundations were kinship and territoriality.

Each had its own proponents, stressing the primacy of one foundation over the other. The British functionalists, especially Radcliffe-Brown, were primarily interested in analyzing how those two aspects of society came together to structure social interactions such that a cohesive social system—in the absence of a Durkheimian type of economic interdependence—could exist. Radcliffe-Brown emphasized the primacy of kinship (1931).<sup>42</sup> For followers of Radcliffe-Brown, this eventually had the effect of associating tribalism—now synonymous with ‘primitive’—with kinship in at least a general way. Methodologically, the main drawback of Radcliffe-Brown’s functionalism was an emphasis on synchronicity which led to the avoidance of any historical questions. While this did avoid conjecture, which was his purpose, it also obscured the functions of the very social processes for which the functionalists were searching and led ‘tribe’ into another empirical crisis. Sparked by two of his students, E. E. Evans-Pritchard and Meyer Fortes, who re-associated tribalism and kinship with segmentary lineage systems, mobile pastoralism, and the Middle East, this crisis ultimately led many scholars to reject the reality of segmentary lineage systems outright.

Evans-Pritchard and Fortes were both unconvinced of the Boasian rejection of the universal primacy of kinship in non-state societies and attempted to synthesize kinship considerations with territoriality.<sup>43</sup> They rejected, on methodological grounds, the search for the origins of social institutions in Anthropology, but made special exception for the work of legal historians such as Maine (1987: 5). Instead, they insisted that anthropology

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<sup>42</sup> But see the American, Kroeber, who argued that the Australian kin groups were not the primary units of social construction, but rather “secondary and often unstable embroideries on the primary patterns of group residence and subsistence associations,” (1938: 308) and “in a sense epiphenomena to other, underlying phenomena such as place of residence” (1938: 307).

<sup>43</sup> Although they once mentioned Lowie’s work, “[they] do not altogether accept his methods and conclusions” (1987: 5), and did not directly address his critique.



should focus on a scientific approach to the study of political institutions. In other words, it should drop the pretense of being an historical science and focus on synchronic, contemporary case studies. Their approach was inductive, comparative, and purely functionalist (1987), leaving history to the historians. From those historians, from Maine to Durkheim (but, perhaps, more proximately from Radcliffe-Brown), they adopted their most fundamental, and later most-criticized assumption: the fundamental distinction between state and stateless societies was the primary political role played by kinship in the latter. To these stateless societies they attributed lineage systems, which established corporate, territorial units and provided the basis for political organization (1987: 6-7). Politically, these societies were divided into segments and maintained an equilibrium through opposition between their segments (1987: 13). In general then, the functionalist approach to stateless societies developed by Evans-Pritchard and Fortes corresponded closely to characterizations of tribalism from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially those focusing on the Middle East and the biblical record. The distinction between *societas* and *civitas* was, in some sense, resurrected and, in a subtle way, as will be demonstrated by the review below, reassociated with the Middle East.

Evans-Pritchard and Fortes were cut from the same methodological and ideological cloth, and their differences originated mostly in their tailoring of this cloth to their different sub-Saharan case studies. Both of these studies had important bearing on the debates that would follow, but Evans-Pritchard's work among the Nuer is perhaps more paradigmatic, more formalized, better known, and more widely discussed than Fortes' work among the Tallensi and, as such, will constitute the bulk of the focus in this section. *The Nuer* (1969), first published in 1940, is also the work most authors cite as the origin

of segmentary lineage theory, and plays an important role in the justification of their rejection of that theory. Thus, it is a topic crucial to the understanding of mobile pastoralism that will be presented in this dissertation. For this reason, and because of the novel use to which Evans-Pritchard put the terms tribe and tribalism, it is necessary to review the major points of his discussion of the Nuer kinship and political systems here.

Evans-Pritchard conducted his study of the Nuer during the early to mid-1930s, spending approximately one year total living among them in four visits. At that time the Nuer occupied territory on both sides of the Nile River in what is presently South Sudan and western Ethiopia. In that semi-arid environment, their primary source of subsistence was derived from the secondary products of cattle pastoralism—milk and cheese—supplemented with small-scale hunting, gathering, and fishing, facilitated by seasonal transhumance. Their sociopolitical structure at that time was based on what would have been a familiar mixture of both kinship and territoriality to the Boasian school. This was not disputed by Evans-Pritchard, who only sought to synthesize the two foundations and demonstrate the primary role played by kinship in ordering social relations.

In his model of Nuer society, Evans-Pritchard used the term tribe to indicate the maximal political unit. The tribe was divided into a system of hierarchically nested segments (1969: 139). “Each segment is itself segmented and there is opposition between its parts. The members of any segment unite for war against adjacent segments of the same order and unite with these adjacent segments against larger sections” (1969: 142). All of these segments were associated with a distinct name and territory (*ibid*). Because of the nature of this segmentary system, seeking the boundaries between tribes is a somewhat arbitrary exercise, the most meaningful divisions at any given time being

circumstantially defined (1969: 148). The political opposition between segments was most clearly illustrated in the blood-feud. The blood-feud existed as a situation of potential hostility between segments of the same order whenever a homicide was inflicted upon one segment by another (1969: 150). Nuer law was customary and was enforced by the principle of self-help. Whenever a person was murdered, the victims were understood to be the murdered person's tribesmen, who could then exact justice either through another murder, or by accepting a payment, in cattle, to satisfy their right of vengeance. "The function of the feud... is... to maintain the structural equilibrium between opposed tribal segments which are, nevertheless, politically fused in relation to larger units" (1969: 159).

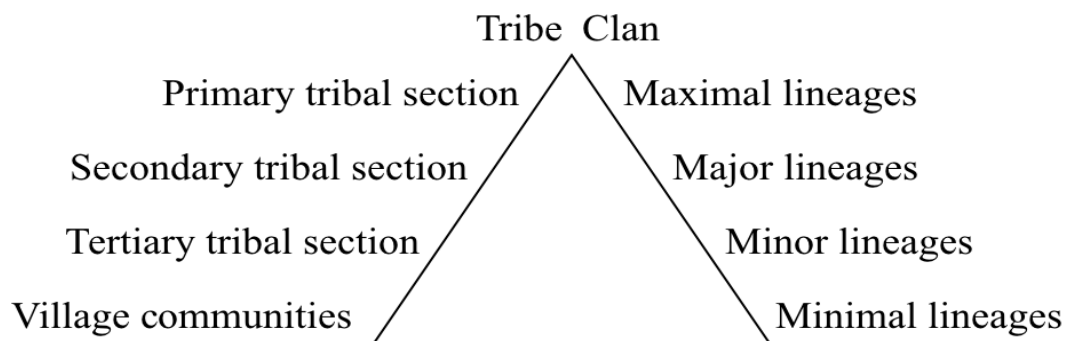
This political system—tribal, segmentary, corporate, and territorial—was tightly wound around the kinship system—the 'clan'—and the structures of both at times evoke the other in Evans-Pritchard's treatment of the Nuer. Just as the tribe is a nested hierarchy of political-territorial segments in this model, clans are groups of agnatic kin divided into lineages of different levels. Like the tribe, these lineage segments are defined only with reference to one another. "Lineage values are thus essentially relative like tribal values, and we suggest later that the processes of lineage segmentation and political segmentation are to some extent co-ordinate" (1969: 198). Unlike the tribal segments, lineage segments are not corporate, localized groups (1969: 203). Instead, at the core of each village is a specific agnatic group, a specific lineage, that is related to those of hierarchically larger units in a clan system that is at the core of each tribe (1969: 211). Every segment in the tribe was associated with the clan in a way nearly analogous to its corresponding hierarchical level in each system. "The system of lineages of the

dominant clan is a conceptual skeleton on which the local communities are built up into an organization of related parts” (1969: 212). Owing to exogamy, these core lineages became closely entwined with other lineages, cognatically (1969: 227).

The association of the lineage system with the tribal system means that as the tribe splits into segments so will the clan split into segments, and that the lines of cleavage will tend to coincide, for lineages are not corporate groups but are embodied in local communities through which they function structurally.

1969: 240

This system can be represented as in figure 2.4. The Nuer tribal system, then, is purely territorial, and persons of any lineage seem to be free to associate with any tribal segment, and hence any agnatic nucleus which provides those tribal segments with a unifying political structure. In this system, Evans-Pritchard found support for Radcliffe-Brown’s hypothesis that pre- or non-state societies<sup>44</sup>, even if they exhibit corporate territorial political units, must essentially be defined by an underlying kinship structure.



**Figure 2.4. Evans-Pritchard's model of the Nuer Tribe-Clan system<sup>45</sup>**

<sup>44</sup> Although the Nuer would seemingly conform to what Evans-Pritchard and Fortes described in their introduction to *African Political Systems* as a stateless society, in *The Nuer* he referred to it curiously as “an acephalous kinship state” (1969: 181). He may have been influenced by what he saw as a possible trend towards political unification in parts of Nuerland, a point which will be taken up later.

<sup>45</sup> After Evans-Pritchard 1969: 248.

The case Evans-Pritchard made in *The Nuer* led to the propagation among European ethnographers of both the assumption of kinship primacy in stateless societies and also the borrowing and adaptation of the segmentary lineage model to analyze the articulation of kinship and territoriality.<sup>46</sup> This borrowing was very direct amongst other Africanists, but nowhere was it more so than in the Middle East, where the use of the lineage model is the most extensive and where it still endures, in one form or another, amongst many ethnographers. Elsewhere, segmentary lineage theory—or the African Model, as it later became known—met with greater resistance as its fundamental assumptions about kinship in stateless societies appeared to clash with the realities of various social systems throughout the world. This was most clearly demonstrated in Oceania. Even among Africanists, though, some aspects of Evans-Pritchard's and Fortes models were contentious, especially as presented in *The Nuer*. The following review of these shortcomings will demonstrate that Evans-Pritchard's adoption of the segmentary lineage model and the form that its adaptation to the Nuer took, stemmed from two sources: first, a methodological awkwardness that can be attributed to Radcliffe-Brown,

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<sup>46</sup> Meyer Fortes' research was also significant in this regard, though it does not constitute a primary focus in this discussion. Meyer Fortes' work among the Tallensi has been described as both less formalized and more nuanced than *The Nuer*. Nevertheless, the assumptions present in Evans-Pritchard's work were just as fundamental to *The Dynamics of Clanship Among the Tallensi* (1945). Fortes described Tallensi society as being segmented into localized units which he called clans, organized around agnatic lineages, roughly comparable to Evans-Pritchard's use of the word tribe in *The Nuer* (1945: 40). The different links between these lineages cut across all of Tallensi society to create overlapping fields of clanship that bound these localized units together into a larger society (1945: 45). Although the structure of this model stands in some contrast to the more politically distinct tribes in *The Nuer*, it shares a fundamental assumption with that work. Kinship was the fundamental relationship by which all social and political action was shaped: "It is no exaggeration to say that every sociological problem presented by the Tallensi hinges upon the lineage system" (1945: 30). Evans-Pritchard and Fortes were attempting to buttress the opinion of previous sociologists and historians that stateless societies, even when clearly organized on territorial political principles, nonetheless had at their core a skeleton of kinship (both authors would make continual reference to this biological analogy). By dissecting two such societies ethnographically, they attempted to reveal the fundamental role of kinship in the pre-state species of society.

and, second, earlier influences from mobile pastoral societies in the Middle East and North Africa.

### *The Sins of the African Model*

Early criticisms of *The Nuer* focused on one primary point. Although some scholars were convinced of Evans-Pritchard's dual clan-tribe model (e.g. Szeligman 1941; Herskovits 1944), others found it too tidy (Richards 1941: 47, 51). Most reviewers agreed that the hard evidence needed to demonstrate the model empirically had not been provided in *The Nuer* (Forde 1941: 374; Richards 1941: 49; Szeligman 1941: 91-2).<sup>47</sup> Evans-Pritchard's subsequent publications filled in some of the ethnographic picture that *The Nuer* was criticized for lacking. These publications could have added further justification to his model, but instead they demonstrated only more clearly the contradictions between it and actual Nuer sociopolitical actions. These contradictions ultimately served to undermine both segmentary lineage systems and even discursive sociopolitical models as valid representations of sociopolitical systems.

Two of these contradictions are provided by Glickman (1971): 1) In *Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer*, Evans-Pritchard stated that blood vengeance is the duty of one's fellow villagers (1951: 1), while earlier in *The Nuer* he made it clear that this act of vengeance must be restricted to the killer and his close agnates, presumably avoiding fellow villagers of the killer that might fall outside his lineage (1940: 158). The ambiguity is clear: who is implicated in the blood feud system? Lineage mates only, or all fellow village members? Clan or tribe? 2) Elsewhere in *Kinship and Marriage*

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<sup>47</sup> Richards argued specifically that the model was too idealized and abstract, because *The Nuer* lacked an historical perspective and was therefore static (1941: 46-49). Nevertheless, the model did find early enthusiastic support, including among other Africanists, especially Gluckman (e.g. 1945: 3-4).

*Among the Nuer*, Evans-Pritchard addressed some seemingly matrilineal tendencies among the Nuer and attempted to explain their existence in the face of his agnatic principle by subordinating that behavior to it:

I suggest that it is the clear, consistent, and deeply rooted lineage structure of the Nuer which permits persons and families to move about and attach themselves so freely, for shorter or longer periods, to whatever community they choose by whatever cognatic or affinal tie they find it convenient to emphasize; and that it is on account of the firm values of the structure that this flux does not cause confusion or bring about social disintegration. *It would seem it may be partly just because the agnatic principle is unchallenged in Nuer society that the tracing of descent through women is so prominent and matrilocality so prevalent* [emphasis added]. However much the actual configurations of kinship clusters may vary and change, the lineage structure is invariable and stable.

Evans-Pritchard 1951: 28

As Glickman pointed out, “This statement implies that if the [cognatic] principle were challenged descent through women would be less prominent and matrilocality less prevalent!” (1971: 309, note 1). Kuper (1982) added a third example from *Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer*, where Evans-Pritchard remarked that:

There is a tendency... for local communities to be groups of people who, being all interrelated in one way or another, must marry into a different local community. This happens because *the Nuer make any kind of cognatic relationship to several degrees a bar to marriage and, at least so it seems to me, it is a bar to marriage because of the fundamental agnatic principle running through Nuer society* [emphasis added]... The solidarity of a group of persons living together, and thereby the lineage structure which contains them, is maintained by emphasizing cognation in the rules of exogamy.

Evans-Pritchard 1951: 47-8

Kuper responded to this passage by asking, “Does this imply that a society based on ‘a fundamental *cognatic* principle’ would not ban marriage with cognates?” (1982: 83, original emphasis). At one point in *Some Aspects of Marriage and Family Among the Nuer*, Evans-Pritchard admitted in the face of the ethnographic evidence he himself

collected, that “The underlying agnatic principle is in glaring contrast to social actualities” (1945: 64-5).

Clearly, Evans-Pritchard’s model of Nuer society suffered from empirical shortcomings. These shortcomings are obvious in his publications and he, in fact, even admitted to them. Why then did he adopt this model at all and continue to defend it? Those seeking to explain why Evans-Pritchard’s model of Nuer society took the peculiar shape that it did usually cite three factors: 1) a switch from an evolutionary approach to the functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown, with 2) the corresponding emphasis on kinship tracing back to the work of Maine and Morgan (e.g. Kuper 1982: 82) and especially Robertson Smith’s *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (e.g. Beidelman 1968; 1974; Dresch 1988), and 3) Evans-Pritchard’s own time spent among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica (e.g. Eickelman 1981: 100, note 16; Kuper 1982: 84), before and during the period of his research among the Nuer. A fourth factor, related to 2 and 3, above, is just as important as these, and to my knowledge has thus far gone unremarked upon: Evans-Pritchard’s interaction with contemporary ethnographic research in North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>48</sup> As will become clear by the end of this section, Evans-Pritchard’s model of Nuer society was informed by its similarities with the discursive models of mobile pastoralists in the Middle East and North Africa. By rejecting an historical perspective, though, he was unable to explain the contradictions between the ideal model he applied to the Nuer and their actual model. To ethnographers outside of the Middle East and North Africa, as more contradictions became apparent between his model and not only the apparent reality

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<sup>48</sup> By reviewing the hypothesized influences of factors 1 through 3, below, it will be possible to demonstrate the importance of the fourth.



of Nuer sociopolitical structures, but even their own discursive models of those structures, segmentary lineage theory appeared completely divorced from reality.

One of the primary reasons Evans-Pritchard formulated his Nuer model in the way he did was due to the methodological transition he effected in the late 1930s, after the initial publications of his Nuer material between 1933 and 1935 in *Sudan Notes and Records*, and the publication of *The Nuer* in 1940. In those earlier papers he included a cultural historical analysis and sought to explain the contradiction between some observed behaviors and the agnatic principle that he detected in Nuer society as a result of a process of ongoing cultural change.<sup>49</sup> Specifically, he understood that the agnatic lineage principle was the original state of Nuer society and it was being undermined by a transition of that society into territorially organized polities (1935: 86-7). As Kuper pointed out (1982: 82), *The Nuer*, then, marked a transition from an evolutionary methodology to a synchronic functionalism, at which point the disparity between the agnatic lineage principle and territorial corporate behavior could no longer be explained as a result of evolution, and instead had to be unified into a harmonious system. Despite this, even in the pages of *The Nuer*, allusions to the original evolutionary perspective can be detected. For instance, on page 181, Evans-Pritchard referred to the Nuer as “an acephalous kinship state,” a curious choice of words that might be easily ignored if not for the fact that in the very same year, together with Fortes, he published an essay on African political systems where the Nuer were called a *stateless* society, due to the presence of lineage structures and the lack of administrative organizations, in contrast to primitive states elsewhere in Africa (1940: 5-7). This remnant evolutionary perspective in *The Nuer* was a primary source of the ambiguities and apparent contradictions

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<sup>49</sup> In some ways, this foreshadows the discussion of Structuration theory, below.

discussed above that led to Kuper's description of Evans-Pritchard as "a sort of G. K. Chesterton of African anthropology" (1982: 82). Glickman (1971: 310-11) pointed out yet another instance of this confusion: based on his reading of *The Nuer*, Morton Fried asserted that Nuer patrilineages were corporate groups (1957: 25), in direct contradiction to Evans-Pritchard's assertion in the same work that "Nuer lineages are not corporate, localized, communities..." (1969: 203). Fried found support for his understanding later in the book, nevertheless:

Probably Jinaca men frequently crossed the Nile to joint their kinsmen to the east and amalgamated with them. Such persons would at once be members of the dominant clan and be spoken of as *diel*, members of the aristocratic group of lineages. But members of other clans which settled in Lou country or after the occupation were classed as strangers (*rul*).

Fried 1969: 212

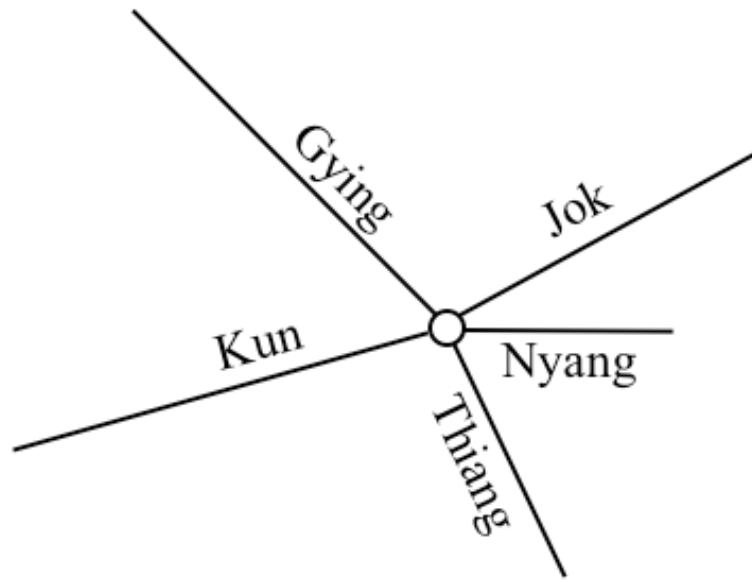
Glickman found the passage ambiguous as to whether or not "the case under discussion reveals a kinship identity that cuts across boundaries of time and space or rather another example of the process whereby immigrants gradually achieve acceptance in Nuer sentiments, kinship and tradition" (1971: 311). In fact, what lies behind the statement is Evans-Pritchard's earlier evolutionary assumption about Nuer political society: it was originally agnatic, but was at the time of his study in the mid-1930s in the midst of an historical (or evolutionary) transition to territorially organized polities.

Evans-Pritchard's methodological shift, from evolutionism, or at least culture history, to Radcliffe-Brown's synchronic version of structural functionalism left him to posit an underlying agnatic principle to Nuer society, which he necessarily relegated to the status of social idiom (1969: 205), because of its ultimate unsuitability in describing contemporary Nuer political and social behavior. The amount of ethnographic data that Evans-Pritchard provided demonstrated the imperfection of this model clearly, leading

him to take contradictory positions as described above. Widespread enthusiasm in the anthropological community for such a seemingly-powerful structural model, and a general optimism that it might be used cross-culturally, provided enough inertia for it to overcome for a time, at least, the basic methodological problems inherent in *The Nuer*. Within a couple of decades, though, the lack of fit between the model and observed reality led many anthropologists to question the African Model's actual existence in the minds of the Nuer themselves and its usefulness in understanding their actions and behavior.<sup>50</sup> For instance, Kuper (1982: 84) pointed out that, in fact, Evans-Pritchard's model of Nuer society was not even a folk model, as the model given to him by the Nuer themselves was territorial and contradicted his understanding of the role of the clan in structuring political relationships. The indigenous conception of those relationships, as related by Evans-Pritchard, is represented diagrammatically in figure 2.5. This diagram differs significantly from that offered by Evans-Pritchard in figure 2.4, above, and demonstrates that he and the Nuer both conceived of their sociopolitical system differently, a situation which would ordinarily cause an ethnographer to stop and consider

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<sup>50</sup> New insight into the agnatic principle of Nuer society came in 1985 with a re-analysis of the historical data surrounding the last few centuries of the Nuer and their relationships with neighboring groups. In this ethnohistorical reconstruction, Kelly argued that the Nuer segmentary system originally resembled that of the neighboring Dinka (1985: 214), with more balanced emphasis on paternal and maternal lineage. This changed at some point when the Nuer began to pay higher bride prices, but without increasing the amount of cattle from the bride price which were distributed to the bride's matrikin (1985: 210). This led to the increased economic significance of a groom's patrilineal descent group (1985: 216). Ultimately, the significance of matrilineal relationships was undercut even more during a phase of territorial expansion some time before the beginning of the nineteenth century, during which these agnatic groups formed the core clusters of new villages and corporate territorial units (1985: 223-224). Evans-Pritchard's initial historical understanding, then, was backwards. The stress on agnatic connections found in Nuer social and political action developed from a point at which there was more equal status between matrilineal and patrilineal connections, at which point the Nuer system would have closely resembled their neighbors, the Dinka. There was no agnatic principle at the heart of the social or political system which was being undermined when Evans-Pritchard carried out his fieldwork among the Nuer, but rather there was a cognatic principle, being challenged by agnatic tendencies for more than five or six generations. Evans-Pritchard's reason for conserving that evolutionarily-derived principle in his functionalist model in *The Nuer* then is clearly indefensible.



**Figure 2.5. An indigenous model of the Nuer sociopolitical system<sup>51</sup>**

why. Working within the boundaries of his original methodological focus—an historical one—Evans-Pritchard understood the contradiction to be a result of recent and rapid cultural transition, but this hypothesis had to be abandoned with the adoption of a

<sup>51</sup> After Evans-Pritchard 1969: 202. Evans-Pritchard's discussion of the diagram is worth citing in full: When illustrating on the ground a number of related lineages [the Nuer] do not present them in the way we figure them... as a series of bifurcations of descent, as a tree of descent... but as a number of lines running at angles from a common point. Thus in Western Nuerland a man illustrated some of the GAATGANKIIR lineages, using the names of their founders, by drawing the figure above on the ground. This representation and Nuer comments on it show several significant facts about the way in which the Nuer see the system. They see it primarily as actual relations between groups of kinsmen within local communities rather than as a tree of descent, for the persons after whom the lineages are called do not all proceed from a single individual. Jok, Thiang, and Kun are three sons of Kir and founders of the maximal lineages GAAJOK, GAAJAK, and GAAGWONG of the GAATGANKIIR clan. Thiang and Kun are shown next to each other because they form the lineage framework of the Gaajak tribe. The Gying lineage does not belong to the GAATGANKIIR clan, but it is shown next to Kun because of the proximity of the Reng section, of which it forms a part, to the Gaagwang section. Nyang is shown as a short line at the side of Jok because, although the lineage which springs from him belongs to the group of lineages founded by Thiang, they live in the Gaagwang tribe together with a lineage descended from Jok, and the Gaagwang tribe is closely associated with the Gaajak tribe. The Nuer... evaluate clans and lineage in terms of their local relations.

1969: 202-203

functionalist methodology. This contradiction eventually caused many to doubt the validity and reality of any folk model and the segmentary lineage model in particular.

Whether or not the segmentary lineage system described by Evans-Pritchard to characterize the Nuer sociopolitical system at the time of his study has any validity when applied to a period before that study, the model does seem to have had an empirical reality at least in North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>52</sup> It was Evans-Pritchard's familiarity with those societies, both through firsthand experience and engagement with ethnographic sources, that suggested the basic outlines of the Nuer system to him. Thus, the rejection of segmentary lineage systems on the grounds of its poor fit with the Nuer is not enough to justify its rejection among other societies *a priori*. This also buttresses the observation made in this study already, that there has been an historical connection between those societies and segmentary lineage systems. The influence of Robertson Smith on *The Nuer* model is particularly clear and is discussed at length by Beidelman (1968; 1974) and Dresch (1988). As discussed above, Robertson Smith came to the conclusion that kinship for the Arabs in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, AD was not biologically defined, but was rather a biological idiom, providing a principle for social and political action. Evans-Pritchard came to a similar conclusion for the Nuer. Their political units were not biologically defined, at least not completely, but they operated on a biological idiom. The difference between the two is subtle, but important. For Robertson Smith's Arabs, social and political spheres are united, even though they are divorced from biological reality. The importance is not the reality, but rather the consistency of the principle. For

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<sup>52</sup> Whether or not the segmentary lineage model as communicated by Evans-Pritchard in *The Nuer* actually reflects Nuer reality—and it clearly does not—the existence of such structures in any other society remains an empirical question, and is not precluded *a priori* by the abuse it suffered at the hands of a functionalist Evans-Pritchard.

Evans-Pritchard's model of the Nuer, the two systems exist independently, the biological principle being tied to the social principle, but nevertheless the *social* system acting as a *political* idiom, indeed the skeleton of that system, while Robertson Smith maintained an historical perspective in his analysis and hypothesized that there was a period in time for those Arabs before their expansion, when biology served as more than idiom. This evolutionary aspect is present also in Evans-Pritchard's earlier publications on the Nuer (1933; 1934; 1935), but it is absent in *The Nuer*.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to, and through Robertson Smith, the influence of Maine and Morgan and the evolutionary scholarly tradition concerning the role of kinship in pre-state societies that followed from them played another role in the shape of *The Nuer*. It stood at the core of both Radcliffe-Brown's conviction that kinship relations underlay even territorial, non-state political groups and Fortes' and Evans-Pritchard's discussion of stateless societies and their conviction in the primary role played in these societies by "the segmentary lineage system, which primarily regulates political relations between territorial segments" (1940: 6). Although this has been recognized by previous scholars in reviews of Evans-Pritchard's work, the full extent of the connection between this intellectual tradition, Robertson Smith's work on early Arab genealogies, and Evans-Pritchard's impressions of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica has gone nearly unremarked upon.

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<sup>53</sup> The reason for this must be functionalist aversion to historical reconstructions. As argued above, Evans-Pritchard's model of Nuer society in 1940 abandoned this historical approach because a basis on an assumption of an arbitrary historical reconstruction might undermine the whole system. For instance, speaking of Robertson Smith's evolutionary view of Arab history, Paul Dresch stated that "the very coherence of the argument almost requires that one reverse the terms so that the present with its contradictions becomes that which is necessary and the past becomes its contingent appanage" (1988: 55). This sort of criticism is why Evans-Pritchard avoided any overt discussion of Nuer history. It would constitute a potential weakness to his model in a strict structural functionalist view. Nevertheless, he still did have an opinion on the historical trajectory of the Nuer, which appears in *The Nuer* from time to time, and ultimately underlies his conviction in the agnatic principle despite the contemporary contradictions, much as Robertson Smith's own model was structured.

Middle Eastern societies lay at the heart of those earlier characterizations of stateless societies. Kuper, for instance, argued that Evans-Pritchard's model

relates in the first place to the work of earlier anthropologists... Morgan, Maine, Durkheim, Robertson Smith, and Radcliffe-Brown. Secondly, it transmutes something of Evans-Pritchard's experience of the Bedouin, as mediated by his reading of Robertson Smith (Eickelman 1981: 37, 100).

Kuper 1982: 84

Kuper is correct in this statement, but he fails to understand two points. First, that the work of the earlier anthropologists, specifically Morgan and Maine, had a specifically Middle Eastern connection in common with Evans-Pritchard's experience, as explained above. The temptation to apply a Middle Eastern model to the Nuer was a result of the fact that models of the earlier cultural evolutionists, whose distinctions between territorial and kinship-based societies, and whose descriptions of those kin-based societies conformed especially well with Arabian examples precisely because they were derived, ultimately, from historical Middle and ancient Near Eastern sources. Initially these sources were found in the form of the Old Testament, but—and this is the second point—for Evans-Pritchard they were supplemented not only with his own experience among the Bedouin, but also additional historical and ethnographic sources such as Robertson Smith's historical study and early ethnographic accounts of segmentary lineage systems such as that offered by Murray (1935).<sup>54</sup> Together, these influences could have convinced him of the accuracy of the earlier evolutionary models and the assumption of the primacy of kinship in ordering pre- or non-state sociopolitical systems, even in the face of the devastating critiques leveled at it from the Boasian school in North America (cf. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1987[1940]: 11).

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<sup>54</sup> In fact, Evans-Pritchard published a review praising Murray's book (1938). In it, Murray made several comparisons between various aspects of the clan system of the Arabian Bedouin of Egypt and "our [Scottish] Highlanders" (1938: 35; see also 39 and 44).

What Evans-Pritchard did, then, was to rejuvenate aspects of the original, evolutionary ‘tribal’ model in *The Nuer* and bring them to an international audience of scholars.<sup>55</sup> He re-associated these originally segmentary lineage features of the mobile pastoral, biblical examples—segmentary, hierarchically structured unilinear sociopolitical units, opposition between segments, mobility and animal husbandry—with pre- or non-state, ‘primitive’ societies. Like the first generation of evolutionists before him, this opened the segmentary lineage model to possible rejection on empirical grounds. The *ur-*model of these two African models was, then, more or less correct in its characterization of Middle Eastern and North African segmentary lineage societies. The problem with Evans-Pritchard’s use of this model was the assumption that it could be exported outside that region, that it was a *universal* model.<sup>56</sup>

At the end of his review of lineage theory, Adam Kuper stated that “The Boasian critique of Morgan’s model of gentile society was intellectually unanswerable, and yet the model survived, to be rejuvenated in the form of lineage theory” (1982: 91). He is at a loss to explain why this was the case, since to his mind “its predecessors and analogs, have no value for anthropological analysis,” (1982: 92) but came to the conclusion that it survived because

It evidently suits modern notions of how primitive societies were organized...  
The model also fits snugly into a broader class of sociological models, in which

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<sup>55</sup> He did not, however, associate these features with the term tribalism, which had a specific and specialized meaning in his writing; he associated them, instead, with the term clan.

<sup>56</sup> This assumption was probably made more palatable owing to a number of similarities between the Nuer and contemporary and historical Middle and Near Eastern societies, especially as Robertson Smith has described the pre- and post-conquest Arabs. The segmentary, patrilineal social system is a long enduring feature of these societies, at least just prior to the rise of Islam, and possibly much earlier. It is, however, neither so temporal nor so universal as Evans-Pritchard and Fortes assumed. It is a cultural feature of some Middle and ancient Near Eastern societies that, in fact, does seem rather durable. The applicability of the model to an earlier stage of Nuer society, and possibly the existence of segmentary lineage societies beyond the boundaries of North Africa and the Middle East is a significant point of inquiry, but it lays beyond the scope of this discussion.



closed societies are analyzed into mutually exclusive groups or classes defined by a single principle.

Ibid.

The first reason may indeed have been the case for Radcliffe-Brown's insistence on the primacy of kinship, but the resuscitation of the model under Evans-Pritchard and Fortes, and its persistence in the ethnographic literature of the Middle East, was undoubtedly a result of their Middle Eastern experience and the ultimate Middle and ancient Near Eastern roots of the evolutionary model of 'tribe' to begin with. For this reason it would be unwise to follow Kuper's example and reject the notion of segmentary lineage theory altogether. Rejections of the segmentary lineage model as *a priori* invalid are predicated, in part, upon an inadequate appreciation for the history of the concept. This misunderstanding is reflected in the common sentiment that Evans-Pritchard invented the model for *The Nuer* (Levy 2009: 158). Rejection of segmentary lineage theory, then, conflates a dissatisfaction with its cross-cultural application, or its application to the Nuer, to its possible usefulness in other cases—specifically in the modern Middle and ancient Near East. There, the segmentary lineage model has lived a longer life, and indeed is still alive, though its understanding has still been warped by historical contingency. Instead of Evans-Pritchard's willful ignorance, though, the effect of contingency in these cases results from an apparent difficulty that, though not inherent to ethnographic analysis, is nevertheless not uncommon to it. In the section that follows I will examine how segmentary lineage theory was adapted by ethnographers of the Middle East to overcome the challenge levied at it—that it also bore no empirical reality in those societies. In these cases, however, the segmentary lineage model at least corresponded to

the indigenous discursive model of society, unlike as was the case for Evans-Pritchard during his study of the Nuer.

### **Segmentary Lineage Systems in the Middle East: A Behavioral Problem**

Just as the debate surrounding Evans-Pritchard and Fortes' African model was reigniting the controversy over the relative importance of kinship and territoriality in Anthropology, and inspiring a new debate about the usefulness of so-called 'folk models', the application of the segmentary lineage model to the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, a society whose members actually offered it as an indigenous, discursive model, was also challenged.<sup>57</sup> This challenge was leveled by Emrys Peters, himself a student of Evans-Pritchard, who had spent 27 months among these Bedouin from 1948 to 1950 (Peters 1967: 261). Peters' challenge to the segmentary lineage model was based primarily on one aspect of the model, which had been discussed also by Robertson Smith and Evans-Pritchard: the feud. To Peters, the Bedouin of Cyrenaica professed a unilinear, hierarchically segmented lineage model (1967: 262). Corresponding to the segmentary lineage model, they also professed to the institution of the feud. In the feud, members of the structurally smallest segmentary units are treated as a single corporate legal group. In a situation where a dispute erupts between members of different units on the smallest structural level, in the most extreme case in the event of homicide, all the male members of the segmentary group are implicated in the dispute. The entire corporate unit was

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<sup>57</sup> The breach between ideology and behavior argued for by Peters in that North African context was paralleled elsewhere only one year later by Leach. In a monograph concerning a village in Sri Lanka, Leach also argued for the distinction between ideology and behavior, arguing that in terms of shaping man's behavior, descent is a fiction, while territoriality is the only reality (Leach 1968: 8). This sort of argument about the primacy of either territoriality or kinship, despite indigenous models of society, was what had hampered evolutionary perspectives in historical studies since they were formulated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

considered to be guilty by the offended party, and therefore all members were equally culpable. When these smallest segments belonged to different secondary segments on the next structural segmentary level, their collateral lineage mates were also implicated in the dispute, creating ever-widening scopes of conflict between segments with political fracture lines made on the basis of proximity of lineal descent (1967: 264).<sup>58</sup> Peters had both general problems with the model and specific problems with how the feud actually played out among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica.

Peters' general problems with the model were three. First, he maintained that the principle of balanced opposition, which drove the feuding behavior, dictated that collateral segments would stand in solidarity with one another against more distantly-related segments. If that were true, Peters said, "then each tribe would be divided into small mutually hostile groups, which completely lacked any possibility of movement, even for pasturing purposes" (1967: 270). Second, he was skeptical of the ability of large groups of collateral segments to come together on the basis of a lack of instituted political authority to organize them. Third, Peters argued that for balanced opposition to work, the model presupposes that all segments must be equal in their population and access to resources in order to produce a situation of political equality among all segments (1967: 271). The Bedouin of Cyrenaica did not fulfill these conditions. First, among the Bedouin, "groups do not come together in their respective structural genealogical orders" (1967: 278-99). Instead, feuding groups often contained members of non-collateral sections which were cognatically related, in contradiction to the professed agnatic principle, while often times collateral agnatic groups remained inactive in a dispute (1967: 277-78). Peters also noted the important role played generally by cognatic

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<sup>58</sup> This phenomenon was discussed in relationship to figures 2.2 and 2.3, above.

relationships, in violation of the expected agnatic principles: “The Bedouin themselves recognize this when they add to their structural explanation the rider that they do not feud with cognatic relatives” (1967: 275), an explanation offered as a contingent explanation to Peters observations that the feud did not always play out as he expected. This tendency to stress cognatic relationships in contradiction to the principles of the segmentary lineage model could have been attenuated by the marriage of parallel cousins, a marriage practice that the Bedouin claimed was preferential, but in fact Peters found this to be the case in almost half of all marriages. Furthermore, given the importance of cognatic kin, this practice actually seemed to be in the practitioner's best interests (1967: 274). To Peters, the segmentary lineage model espoused by the Bedouin was rendered useless as a sociological model:

The difference between their position and a sociological one is that they see this as a contingency not as a persistent necessity; they are able to maintain their position because they see their behavior as explicable in terms of the simple ossified structure of their genealogical relationships. What they fail to appreciate is that these ‘contingencies’ are ecologically, economically, demographically, and politically essential.

Peters 1967: 275

In other words, the exceptions to the rules of segmentary lineage theory are the actual normative circumstances of behavior in Cyrenaica, and so other principles than the folk model are actually guiding their actions. The logical consequence of this rejection of the Bedouin folk model as a valid sociological model, though, creates a problem of ideology, if not for Peters then at least for the Bedouin of Cyrenaica. If their model does not inform behavior, why then do the Bedouin prescribe to it? Peters gives a wholly unsatisfying answer to this question when he says that despite not corresponding to actual social practices,

the model, nevertheless, can only be a representation of what a particular people, the Bedouin, conceive their social reality to be; it is a kind of ideology which enables them, without making absurd demands on their credulity, to understand their field of social relationships and to give particular relationships their *raison d'être*.

Peters 1967: 270

But if the model does not inform behavior, despite purporting to do so, how can it possibly help people to understand their society? How can it do anything but confuse their understandings of their social relationships?<sup>59</sup> There have been two influential attempts by Middle Eastern ethnographers to answer this question. Both rely to some degree on re-focusing the rules of the segmentary lineage model held by Peters, and challenging the notion that it really bore no weight at all on the course of events in the societies where it obtained.

The first of these attempts belongs to Philip Carl Salzman, whose explanation for the lack of fit between the Bedouin folk model and their actual behavior rests upon both Peters' understanding of the segmentary lineage model and his analysis of the behavior of the Bedouin. First, Salzman criticized Peters for his strict interpretation of the Bedouin folk model (1978a: 62), arguing that the lineage model, in most societies where it can be said to operate, does so alongside additional structural principles of social behavior. He referred to these hybrids as "lineage-plus models" (1978a: 61). The inability of Peters' strict interpretation of the segmentary lineage model to account for all variations of Bedouin behavior then, specifically the principle of balanced opposition and the disparity

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<sup>59</sup> Despite this problem, Peters' argument went unchallenged for over a decade. The ubiquity of the segmentary lineage system as a folk model of social relations in the Middle East and North Africa made it difficult to ignore, but the poor fit between it and actual social behavior was accepted by most ethnographers in the somewhat contradictory terms of Peters, above. For instance, in the first edition of his anthropological introduction to the Middle East, Eickelman stated that "As an ideology of social relations among many tribal groups in the Middle East, the notion of segmentation has considerable importance. As a sociological mode it is inadequate" (1981: 104). But why would people hold a model of society that did not inform actual social practice?

of population sizes, or the existence of idle tertiary units in cases of feud, is to Salzman's mind a result of the lineage model being only one part of the actual sociological model of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica. Salzman also took issue with the fact that Peters did not support his rejection of the segmentary lineage model with any specific case studies and suggested a number of ways in which the lineage system might still be guiding behavior, even if it were unable predict it (1978a: 56). For instance, in terms of the coalescing of secondary groups in the feud, Salzman suggested the possibility that a segmentary lineage structure and the principle of complementary opposition might inform the inaction, as well as the action, of a collateral unit, such that group actions were still limited and informed by the folk model: "If some groups did not do what they 'should' have done, did they also avoid doing what they 'should not' have done?" (1978a: 56).

Nevertheless, Salzman was largely sympathetic to the point that Peters made and accepted the observation that the Bedouin of Cyrenaica were largely not acting according to their segmentary lineage folk model (*ibid*). Unlike Peters, though, who seemed to sidestep the ideological issues involved in this conclusion, Salzman tackled them head-on. On the question of why such a model would be consciously retained and reflected upon in day-to-day life, while seemingly having little to no relevance for the actual social relationships obtaining in society, Salzman suggested that "the lineage model is maintained because it provides a framework, not for common sense understanding, as Peters would have it, but for social mobilization in circumstances which remove the territorial commitment from consideration" (1978a: 63). Salzman understood the typical circumstances of Bedouin life as being highly mobile, and understood the segmentary lineage model of social relations as providing structure in mobile situations where

territorial interests are largely nonexistent and so do not inform social activity (1978a: 68). Because the Bedouin, at the time of Peters study of them, were living sedentary, agricultural lives, the segmentary lineage model of social behavior was irrelevant for organizing actions in terms of group and individual self-interest. Nevertheless, the segmentary lineage folk model persisted in the minds of the Bedouin because they might shift back to a more mobile lifestyle at any moment, and so the segmentary lineage model “is a kind of conceptual insurance, a social structure in reserve, available for activation in the future when current conditions disappear and an alternative organizational form, one not based upon territoriality, is required” (ibid).

Salzman’s argument for the existence of such “social structures in reserve” as a general phenomenon is explored in another publication (1978b: 618). There he identified three strategies by which a society might hold alternative social ideologies in reserve for a specific situation in which they might be profitably employed.<sup>60</sup> The third strategy is the one which is most relevant for the purposes of this discussion, and is also the least satisfying and most problematic example of social structures in reserve: asserted ideologies.

In this case, the organisational option is farther from day-to-day reality, existing primarily in verbal assertions but being conspicuously absent from actual

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<sup>60</sup> These include so-called “deviant minorities,” “operational generalisation,” and “asserted ideology” (1978b: 620-621). Of the three strategies, only deviant minorities and asserted ideology are actually ideological in the sense of relating to the ideas and morals that a society collectively holds about how it functions and why. Salzman understood deviant minorities to include subgroups of a necessarily large and varied society that hold contradictory values of social interaction which are nonetheless preserved, for instance in the form of institutionalization. The example he used to illustrate this point is the cult of Yahweh in Ancient Israel, which he understood to have been a common source of dissent to the attitudes and mores held by the wider Israelite society (1978b: 618-619). Operational generalization, by contrast, relates not to issues of social ideology and morality, but rather to economic practices and are therefore “closer to the day-to-day reality” (1978b: 620). For this reason I do not consider it to be in the same class as Salzman’s deviant minorities and asserted ideology. The example Salzman used to illustrate this strategy is the common practice found among mobile pastoralists of structurally fundamental corporate or economic units engaging in a wide variety of economic activities, thereby maximizing economic opportunity and the possibility of future adaptation to changing economic conditions (ibid).

organisational patterns... The actors acknowledge, agree, and recognise a form of organisation, but they do not seem to put that form into practice 'on the ground'. They do not seem to do what they say, or say what they do. And when this discrepancy is pointed out, the instances of actual organisation are discounted as exceptions or atypical deviations... having no serious bearing upon the asserted ideology.

Salzman 1978b: 621

Asserted ideologies, then, are held forefront in the minds and conversations of social actors as being sociological models of their own society, and providing a moral context for social actions, but they do not actually form the context for that action, which is informed by other implicit principles. This explanation of the sort of disjuncture between behavior and the folk model witnessed by Peters among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica is clever, but ultimately unsatisfactory. Salzman must make the argument that consciously held social ideologies can inform behavior and are themselves adaptive to specific material situations, but because of the specific mechanism of 'asserted ideologies' he must argue paradoxically that "ideologies and folk models can have lives of their own, independent of direct and immediate behavior" (1978a: 69). If an asserted ideology is always potentially irrelevant, and this irrelevancy causes no particular difficulty for the members of a society which asserts it, why should it ever correspond to, or inform, actual social behavior? Salzman does not address this contradiction.

An unsatisfying implicit explanation can be inferred. The societies which inform Salzman's understanding of asserted ideologies are those which were once more mobile but were more sedentary, agricultural, and territorially-based in the ethnographic present. This implies first that sedentary, territorially-based societies are not in need of an asserted ideology at all, or at least that there is no need for an asserted ideology of any territorially-based society to correspond with actual social practices. When made



explicit, this implication seems dubious. Because Salzman allowed that these societies were once, and will possibly again be, mobile and non-territorially-based societies, he implies that there is something specific about this lifestyle that is novel or unique from sedentary societies that requires an arbitrary set of social rules and values. It is not being argued here that there are no qualitative differences between mobile and sedentary subsistence strategies—quite the opposite, in fact—but instead that there is no reason to assume that one is standard, or normal, and that one is aberrant and in need of special rules. In both cases, folk ideologies would serve to supply a moral background and structural context which, by its very nature, is a product of accumulated cultural history and specifically obtaining conditions of living and can in neither situation be so easily divorced from actual social behavior.

It seems more likely that in a situation where an asserted ideology is habitually contradicted by social behavior, the folk model itself might be enduring simply as a result of cultural momentum, and would be therefore heading towards an inevitable process of change that might bring it into closer accord with developing social values and mores that reflect contemporary living conditions and practices. Salzman did not deny the possibility of such culture change in principle, but did dispute its possibility in terms of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica:

One could argue, of course, that the lineage ideology is a survival from times past, and that in due course it will be scrapped. But this kind of argument is especially suspect in an area such as politics, which is a matter of daily discussion, argument, and conscious reflection.

Salzman 1978a: 63

Contrary to Salzman's line of thinking here, I maintain that it is *more likely* that the lineage ideology will be scrapped, especially in an area such as politics, which, in

addition to being a matter of daily discussion, is also a matter of actual daily practice. Those parts of ideology least likely to be changed by the material conditions obtaining in a society are those that are most abstract and philosophical, least related to actual, repeated, daily practice and, therefore, least likely to contradict it. By this I do not mean to argue that asserted ideologies cannot function in a manner similar to that described by Salzman. The benefit of a lineage ideology in conditions of sudden territorial disruption is obvious, but the simple fact of the benefit itself cannot be used to deny ideological change, especially under such conditions where asserted ideology allegedly diverges so strongly from actual social behavior. One of the largest faults of Peters' rejection of the folk model of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica is that any diachronic perspective is entirely absent from his argument. He goes so far as to say, at the end of his essay, that he sees "no reason to assume that social relations as I observed them are present today or that they were the same at any time in the past either" (1967: 280), and then on the very next page continues, saying

This does not mean... that an account of the part of the social life of the Bedouin as it existed in 1950 must be nothing more than a disconnected piece of history, unrelated to a prior state of things and wholly useless for the understanding of the contemporary oil-producing cum mixed pastoral-agricultural economy.

Peters 1967: 281

Peters failed to consider the historical implications for his observation that the Bedouin folk model "must perforce be abandoned" (1967: 261), while Salzman's clever, but ultimately unsatisfying explanation for the divergence between folk model and folk behavior had to make use of such a historical perspective, while simultaneously denying, or at least deeply discounting (1978a: 63), the role that might be played by a long term trajectory of cultural and ideological change.

Another possible solution to this ideological problem has been offered by Paul Dresch, who rejected segmentary lineage theory, instead advocating the principle of segmentation. He associated segmentary lineage theory with the sort of descriptive-predictive interpretation of behavior which was so unfulfilling in Peters application of it, especially the criteria that power between the structural segments of society must be balanced. By contrast, segmentation “deals with formal relations that characterize the types of events possible” (1986: 309). Dresch's definition of segmentation in the Middle East and North Africa was taken fully from Evans-Pritchard:

Any segment sees itself as an independent unit in relation to another segment of the same section, but sees both segments as a unity in relation to another section; and a section which from the point of view of its members comprises opposed segments is seen by members of other sections as a unsegmented unit.

Evans-Pritchard 1969 [1940]: 147

Segmentation, instead of being a descriptive model of behavior like segmentary lineage theory, is to Dresch a structuring model. It is not only an emergent property of interaction, but also informs that interaction, giving it context and meaning, a perspective lacking in Peters' work.

This is not a causal model that tells one reliably what will happen next. People do not behave, they act (Dumont 1970: 6), and the approach in terms of segmentation characterizes the forms of action available. To do this it breaks down what in practice is a simultaneity. If we begin, in a fairly stable system, with observing political events, then political relations (which those events exemplify) precede them logically, values... are prior to political relations, structural relationships precede them, and complementary or balanced opposition, which specifies the form of those structural relationships, precedes or underlies the whole sequence.

Dresch 1986: 318

Segmentation, then, is the confluence of structural principles described by Evans-Pritchard, which action presupposes, and “whatever course events take, their significance derives in large part from the structure” (1986: 317).

Dresch's understanding of segmentation is informed by a very different reading of Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer* than was offered above, one that derives from Ardener (1971), Dumont (1975) and Pocock (1961) (Dresch 1988: 60). For these authors, the significance of Evans-Pritchard's work is in defining the principle of segmentation, which, when lifted from its Middle Eastern and North African context is really nothing more than simply the structural principle of opposition between groups, free of any lineage or kinship implications (Dresch 1988: 61). Dresch defended Evans-Pritchard's model of Nuer society and the apparent contradictions between it and Nuer actions by understanding agnation as a structural principle, supplying context for social action, but not predicting which actions must be taken (1988: 59). This perspective overlooks the disjunction not only between Evans-Pritchard's model of Nuer society and actual Nuer social action, but also between his model and the indigenous, asserted Nuer model of their own society. Whether or not the concept of segmentation encapsulates any degree of 'theoretical capital' (1988: 52) outside of a Middle Eastern and North African context is an empirical question and is not solved, nor even well investigated, by Evans-Pritchard's adoption of a segmentary lineage model to characterize a Sub-Saharan society.<sup>61</sup>

As a result of this structural and sympathetic reading of Evans-Pritchard, Dresch's model suffers a serious shortcoming related to the same sort of functional synchronic perspective that crippled *The Nuer* and Evans-Pritchard's later writings. It is unable to account for cultural change arising from a disjuncture between folk ideology and actual practice. In this respect the model is static and of dubious use to diachronically-oriented

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<sup>61</sup> There is more to be made of Evans-Pritchard's direct influence from contemporary writers such as Murray (1935), than either Kuper (1982: 84) in terms of an actual existing sociological model, or Dresch (1988: 56-7) in terms of the specific particularity of that model, have acknowledged.

pursuits such as archaeology or history. Dresch did not address Peters' argument specifically, except to note that it proves the unsuitability of the descriptive-predictive use to which segmentary lineage theory has been put. He did address the problem of the relations between ideology and behavior, but not in terms that can be related to culture change:

...it is hardly surprising that hypothetical questions by outsiders... are answered with a certain uniformity, particularly when the terms of the question preempt the answer... [but] Almost anything could happen. It is not that the relevant local concepts are 'malleable' (Rosen 1979:46), but that they do not specify their own application, and this application is highly variable.

Dresch 1986: 312

Dresch understood, then, that exceptions to segmentation may abound.<sup>62</sup> This implies that there are still other principles supplying the context of social action that are either more fundamental to the social structure in question, or are simply additional to it and unexplicated. With this caveat supplied, his concept of segmentary societies is, in practice, little different from Salzman's own depiction of 'lineage-plus' ideologies.

While Salzman discounted the possibility of culture change through his understanding of the conservative role played by asserted ideologies, Dresch's functional perspective does not actively deny it, but, like the African model, it is nonetheless blind to it altogether.

Despite their different initial perspectives, Salzman and Dresch share two points in their criticism of Peters' predictive use of the segmentary lineage model. These points can be profitably adopted into an ideological or structural understanding of segmentary lineage systems, such as that asserted by the Bedouin of Cyrenaica. These points relate

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<sup>62</sup> Dresch's comment that an action might not be treated as expected, because it may not be understood within the context of the ideological system seems to admit the possibility that Peters is right in his observation that the folk model of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica is not followed in practice, at least in some situations. This very statement seems, though, to contradict his insistence that "the structure that action presupposes is not itself negotiated. The categories it informs are there before a sequence of events begins, and, whatever course events take, their significance derives in large part from the structure" (1986: 317). This is a point shared with structuration theory, which is discussed below.

to real and assumed disjunctures between ideology and social action. The first point shared is that a segmentary lineage system does not prescribe specific actions, but rather constrains the possible universe of behavior and gives meaning to all social actions, even when they appear to contradict the principles that are understood to embody it. This point was stressed most by Dresch. Second, a segmentary lineage model should not be assumed to encapsulate the totality of the structures and principles contextualizing social practice. This point was stressed most by Salzman. How both authors fall short is by their inability to account for cultural change in their understandings of why and how principles of asserted ideology might be contradicted by actual social practices.

### **Culture Change and a Structural Solution**

Anthony Giddens provided a useful conceptual framework with which to explain such contradictions between ideology and action, and how they might relate to long-term cultural change. This framework is his theory of structuration. Aspects of his theory of structuration are detailed in four books published between 1976 and 1984.<sup>63</sup> Structuration, like previous structural and functional models, understands societies to be the products of a relationship between two phenomena: social structures, principles, systems, and institutions that provide social context for human actions and individual agency, or actual social actions (1986: 162). What is essential to structuration, and that which provides the mechanism for change that will be considered here, is the notion of a recursive relationship existing between human action and the social systems and social structures which provide context for that action (1986: 3). Just as social structures

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<sup>63</sup> *New Rules of the Sociological Method, Central Problems in Social Theory, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, vol. 1, and *The Constitution of Society*.

provide context for human action, so human action influences the shape of those structures, though this is far from being a simple, reifying relationship. To understand why this is not the case, it is necessary to briefly outline the nature of human consciousness from a sociological perspective, and the different structural levels that are distinguished in the theory of structuration.

The mechanism for the recursiveness of action and structure in human society is dependent entirely upon the human quality of reflexivity, that is “the monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life” (ibid). What this means is that, essentially, humans have knowledge of the principles guiding their social actions.<sup>64</sup> This knowledge is divided into two kinds, discursive consciousness, which is directly accessible in the conscious mind of the actor to justify actions taken, and practical consciousness, which is not (1986: 4). Practical consciousness is, however, a practical necessity. It is a socially shared “*mutual knowledge*” which “is inherent in the capability to ‘go on’ within the routines of social life” (ibid). “The line between discursive and practical consciousness is fluctuating and permeable, both in the experience of the individual agent and as regards comparisons between actors in different contexts of social activity” (ibid). Discursive and practical knowledge are informed by and through the process of the reflexive analysis of behavior, thereby structuring social systems.

These social structures are best understood as being divided into three hierarchical levels of distinction: structural principles, structures, and structural properties. Structural principles are the most abstract, and rank highest in this hierarchy. They are defined as “Principles of organization of societal totalities” (1986: 185). Structures are “Rule-

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<sup>64</sup> It is important to note that this may not always be the case. The extent to which a person understands the significance of their actions, and hence the structures involved in contextualizing those actions, is a measure of that person’s social competence (ibid).

resource sets, involved in the institutional articulation of social systems” (ibid).

Structural properties are the least abstract category, and the most pertinent to day to day activity. They are “institutionalized features of social systems, stretching across time and space” (ibid). Structures at each of these levels are associated with a different span of time (and space). For instance, structural principles, being most abstract and divorced from the day-to-day reflexive recursive relationship with actions are associated with the longest range of time. Study of society from this perspective is what Giddens referred to as “institutional analysis” (ibid), and sets structuration apart from structural or functional frameworks that tend towards synchronic perspectives in social analysis. It is precisely this diachronic view that is necessary and which was lacking from Salzman, Dresch, and Peters, above.

The process by which this reflexive recursiveness influences structures, then, has chronological implications. Reflexive monitoring of action has its most direct recursive effect upon the least abstract, most relevant social structures in day-to-day practice. The form of these lower structures, along with reflexive recursiveness, will also have an effect on higher-order social structures, but over a potentially wider chronological perspective. In other words, over a longer period of time. Giddens referred to these different perspectives each as a different “*epoché*”, the widest being the *epoché* of institutional analysis (e.g. 1986: 190). In this way, changes in day-to-day activities can be understood to eventually result in complete cultural transformations over a sufficient period of time.

Given the reifying nature of the model, it would be logical at this point to ask what the sources of these changes are. The answer given by Giddens is that in class-divided societies these changes are largely the result of structural contradictions (1986: 193). To



explore this aspect of structuration at this point, however, would take this conversation too far afield. It is sufficient to note here that within structuration theory there is also a distinction between different kinds of societies. The type most pertinent in the case of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica is that which is described as tribal society—but not because Giddens understood a tribal society to be characterized by segmentary lineages or mobile pastoralism. Tribal societies, in terms of structuration theory, are understood to be small, oral cultures, governed by tradition and long-term social structure stability (1986: 182). Giddens referred to such societies as ‘cold,’ by which he means they are not subject to the ‘hot’ institutional contradictions that drive structural (ergo historical) changes in class-divided societies (1979: 220). He described two sources of change for such cold societies. The first of these is social reproduction itself. Like language, variations in social reproduction introduce slow, incremental, and unintended outcomes. The second source is comprised of external influences that disrupt daily life, such as “the effects of sharp ecological transmutations, of natural disasters, or the establishing of relations of dependence or conflict with societies of differing cultural composition” (ibid). These external influences produce more radical changes on cold societies by interrupting the routine and traditional practices that obtained at the time of disruption, producing fundamental changes in social structure. “This is not the undermining of traditional modes of belief and conduct as such, but the replacement of certain traditional practices by other traditional practices” (1979: 221). Giddens’ theory of structuration in effect provides a robust means of accounting for change in traditional societies.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Dissatisfaction with this aspect of the traditional structuralist approach seems to have underlain Salzman’s theory of ‘asserted ideology’ as a ‘social structure in reserve’ (cf. Salzman 1980a: 1-5). Salzman’s statement that “Structuralism is of course notorious for providing no explanation of change and

What, then, does the diachronic perspective of structuration theory have to offer concerning the apparent contradiction between the folk model of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica and their actual behavior between 1948 and 1950, as understood by Emrys Peters? Appeal to structuration suggests that Peters was witnessing a case of Giddens' second type of 'cold' society structural change in progress. In fact, Peters noted potential sources change that had been influencing Bedouin society in Cyrenaica since the earlier part of the nineteenth century with the advent of the Sanusi religious order and the Italian invasion of 1911 (1967: 280-81). Although he claimed that his account of the years 1948-1950 must be related to these prior states just as much to the present state in the late 1960s, after abrupt industrialization following the birth of a local oil economy, this historical, diachronic, or what Giddens would call institutional, perspective is lacking in his analysis. The system that the Bedouin described, a segmentary system organized through agnatic kinship structures, operating on a principle of balanced opposition through a rhetoric of honor—a segmentary lineage system—was clearly not commensurable with their territorially defined existence in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Salzman 1995: 401; Salzman 1996a: 32). A contradiction existed between the social structure of these Bedouin and their material reality.<sup>66</sup> The structures which were appealed to during discursive reasoning, and which formed a part of discursive consciousness—to the extent that Peters was correct in his opinion that they provided no reliable guide for action—were fading away. Other structural relations were the *de facto* reality of their social system, but these existed only as a part of the shared group

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no approach through which it can be comprehended" (1980: 3) cannot be applied to Giddens theory of structuration.

<sup>66</sup> In addition to structural contradictions Giddens also identified existential contradictions, by which he means "an elemental aspect of human existence in relation to nature or the material world" (1986: 193). This is clearly the case with the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, as Salzman points out.

knowledge, or practical knowledge. The contingencies, which were so unsatisfying to Peters, were precisely that—contingencies. They were contingent circumstances *relative to the structural principles as understood within the collective discursive consciousness* of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica. Their ability to explain these contingencies, when pressed, and their apparent consideration of them prior to action, demonstrates that other structural principles, in the realm of practical consciousness, were at work and were providing a different structural context for action, even if the relations between all of these competing structural projections were in flux. The ideological system of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica was in the midst of a fundamental and relatively abrupt structural change.

Salzman was right to characterize this discursive system as conservative, but without the historical perspective offered by structuration, as above, he failed to realize that the days of the folk model were numbered, regardless. As the structural principles cited in discursive reasoning became less relevant to actual political realities, they would be supplanted by some actual representation of the structural system. This would not happen immediately, but perhaps in the course of just a few generations. The principles of social structure situated in an individual's practical consciousness would then become discursive and supplant the previous discursive system for precisely the reason that Salzman thought they would not: because they pertain to "an area such as politics, which is a matter of daily discussion, argument, and conscious reflection" (1978a: 63). Salzman was wrong to characterize these conditions as "social systems in reserve" (1978a: 68). The Bedouin of Cyrenaica were conserving a social system in their discursive consciousness, in a way, but only if material conditions did revert. Even then, to speak of a reversion of structural practices is to deny the possibility that structural changes took

place in the mean time and that they will have any effect on the resulting society, even after a shift back to territorial instability. This perspective is focused too tightly on the day-to-day interactions of individuals with lower orders of structuring principles, which tends to produce functional, reifying perspectives of societies. It lacks a broader institutional view of time and, in effect, denies a historical perspective to the problem.<sup>67</sup>

This examination of the controversy surrounding Peters' proposed divorce of the lineage model of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica from their actual behavior indicates two important points for this study. First, as maintained by both Dresch and Salzman, segmentary lineage theory is not and should not be a predictive model of behavior, in the sense of requiring any sort of action on behalf of the actor. Instead, segmentary lineage theory simply describes a set of social structures which inform the sorts of situations that

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<sup>67</sup> This is not to say that there is no connection between the forms of previous and subsequent social structures. Changes to structure must necessarily take place as modifications to existing structures and are not drawn whole cloth. Examples such as the Yomut (discussed further in the following chapter), which Salzman drew from the work of William Irons in order to make the case for segmentary lineage systems in reserve, demonstrate this point clearly. The Yomut are  
in gross outline similar to the Bedouin of Cyrenaica in being nomadic, in herding livestock and engaging in some cultivation, and in having a genealogically based ideology, an acephalous segmentary political system, and territories associated with groupings at lower and higher orders of segmentation. Yomut Turkmen groups, like those of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, are allied with other Yomut groups spatially distant against neighboring Yomut groups.

Irons 1975: 57

There are, however, two important differences between the two societies. First, the territorial groupings of the Yomut are of a higher segmentary order than the primary territorial units of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica (ibid). Second, those territorial units are genealogically combined into non-territorial units "so that each small territorial *il* [the highest sub-tribal unit] has as neighbors on one or two sides members of an opposing confederacy" (Irons 1975: 58). The Yomut example proves that structural changes are conservative where possible. As a result of the good correspondence between an earlier genealogical system and a later territorial one, in the Yomut system there is very little existential contradiction and as a result there is no corresponding structural change. Salzman went a step further. Citing continuous historically documented disruptions to Yomut lives by Persian armies (Irons 1975: 72-73), he argued that the genealogical system served as a sort of insurance in the face of suddenly dissolved territorial relations and asked, "It is any wonder that their genealogical model for social organization was kept in good repair?" (1975: 63). This perspective is far too teleological and indicative of the sort of synchronic functionalist perspective being criticized here. The mere fact that the segmentary kinship system is useful for possible future conditions does not explain its continued existence. In the short term, the Yomut might be understood as switching between states, but over the long term one might expect a definite historical trajectory. Thus, the alternation of Yomut social systems should not be understood so much as a switching between binary states, but rather as a shifting the course of a historical trajectory.

are possible, and provides contextual meaning to the actions that actors take. This understanding is in broad agreement with the primary tenets of structuration. Second, the contradiction of segmentary lineage theory by social action, where it can be demonstrated, indicates the possibility of a state of structural flux—historical change. This possibility is suggested by structuration theory but was lacking in the analysis of Peters, Salzman, and Dresch, all of whom took an overly synchronic view of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica.

Despite recent institutional change, the existence of such similar systems over a wide area, and over such a long span of time, historically attested from at least the first millennium BC and very possibly the second, demonstrates the institutional longevity of segmentary lineage systems in the aggregate, if not for any specific society. Kuper's opinion that "the lineage model, its predecessors and its analogs, have no value for anthropological analysis" (1982: 92) must be rejected. Nevertheless, Evans-Pritchard's adoption of this model for his description of Nuer society, and the behavioral problem identified by Peters, served to obscure the 'tribal' (segmentary lineage system) connection to the Middle East just as it had been by the production of the evolutionary models of Maine and Morgan just a century before.

### **A Summary of the Legacy of 'Tribe' and Segmentary Lineage Systems**

The word 'tribe' is still somewhat taboo among ethnographers and ethnologists, even if it finds continued use among archaeologists to describe the space 'between bands and states', or sometimes between bands and chiefdoms. Tribes are not completely self-sufficient hunter-gatherers, nor are they urbanized city-states. The term today typically

has the implied meaning of a non-hierarchical, yet interdigitated multi-village community with some degree of political integration, however that is managed and as a result of whatever cause or purpose. Beginning with the Marquis de Condorcet, and continuing through Morgan, the implicit and explicit foundations of tribe were laid upon biblical sources, which defined the tribal social system in terms of a segmentary lineage system and its subsistence system in terms of mobile pastoralism. The continual broadening of the bases of 'tribal' societies beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century served to obscure that original relationship to the point that it seems to have been forgotten by many commentators on the subject (e.g. Godelier 1973: 4). Throughout the whole period, tribe had also been used uncritically to refer to a unit of ethnographic study, technologically and politically simplistic. When Service and Sahlins presented their neo-evolutionism in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, segmentary lineage systems had become only a sub-type of the tribal category.<sup>68</sup>

Around the same time, E. E. Evans-Pritchard and Meyer Fortes borrowed the concept of segmentary lineage theory out of the history books and contemporary ethnographic accounts from the Middle East and North Africa, exporting it to Sahelian societies where it seems to have had no rightful place. These struggles further served to obscure the operation of actual segmentary lineage systems and culminated in a general feeling of frustration and skepticism in anthropology, epitomized by rejection of the system altogether, in every society, regardless even of the indigenous folk model (e.g. Kuper 1982; Holý 1996). Peters' (1967) own difficulty with the Bedouin of Cyrenaica only underscored the problematic nature of segmentary lineage systems for a generation

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<sup>68</sup> The adoption of the term into neo-evolutionary systems of sociopolitical change is addressed in the excursus following this chapter.

of non-Middle Eastern anthropologists. Among most scholars of the Middle East, though, the term tribalism did not disappear as pejorative, to be replaced by bland substitute, nor did it lose its essential association with segmentary lineage theory, even if it sometimes seemed to be eclipsed, semantically and empirically, by the far more popular term ‘segmentation’. Here, geographically, academically, and lexically, tribalism lived on as mobile pastoral, segmentary lineage societies. Nevertheless, it was not entirely independent of the controversy surrounding ‘tribe’ following from its employment in the four-stage model of general evolution, widespread dissatisfaction with the African model (cf. Eickelman 2002: 118-119), or Fried’s popular attack. Given the etymological relationship between tribe and the Middle and ancient Near East, it should not be surprising that the many characterizations of the general features of these contemporary tribal societies are in large agreement with those of the earliest progressive and evolutionary models discussed above, and the mis-characterization of some aspects of Nuer society by Evans-Pritchard, and are in almost perfect agreement with the description Peters made (1967) of the folk model of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, which he ultimately rejected as a sociological model.

Within the Middle East, as elsewhere in Africa and all over the world, there has been a great deal of ink spilled over the term ‘segmentary lineage system’.<sup>69</sup> Unlike in Sahelian and Sub-Saharan Africa, the existence of segmentary lineage systems as native sociological models was never in doubt, though their usefulness as actual guides of sociopolitical action was and still is. Peters’ analysis of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica seems

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<sup>69</sup> Many authors have been cited throughout this chapter for their discussions of various aspects of the tribal, segmentary lineage phenomenon and many more could be added (e.g. Murray 1935; Evans-Pritchard 1940; Barth 1961; Sahlins 1961; Irons 1975; Salzman 1978a, 1978b; Khazanov 1984; Dresch 1986; Crone 1993; Salzman 2000; Eickelman 2002; Salzman 2008).

to have opened a Pandora's box by discounting so deeply the native model of behavior offered to him. A heated debate between Ernest Gellner (1969, 1983, 1995, 1996) and others (e.g. Geertz 1971, 1979; Munson 1989, 1993, 1995; Hammoudi 1996) concerning the reality of these systems in Morocco generally served to discredit the model. As discussed already, some, like Salzman (1978a, 1978b) and Dresch (1986), attempted to put the genie back into the bottle but it was not until the mid-1980s that majority opinion began to shift back in favor of the usefulness of these folk models of society (e.g. compare Eickelman 1981: 100 and Eickelman 2002: 122-23). Now, however, the term segmentation (or in the case of Salzman, 'lineage plus') is more often preferred to segmentary lineage system to describe these systems.

There remains an ideology problem in the ethnography and history of the Middle East and the history of the ancient Near East, as regards segmentary lineage systems. This was discussed above in reference to Giddens' theory of structuration. The original problem was a pitfall for Peters. It colored the conversation about segmentary lineage systems for nearly two decades. The second problem arises out of its solution and can be generally identified with Dresch's concept of segmentation, in contradistinction to segmentary lineage systems. It is reflected in Eickelman's statement that "People... sometimes hold that the principles of segmentary ideology explain the 'essence' of their political activities, although... this is simply not the case. Other grounds for political action coexist with segmentary ones" (2002: 117). This same perspective is apparent also when Dresch says of segmentation that "there remains a disjunction between what people do and say... It is not that the relevant local concepts are 'malleable' (Rosen 1979: 46), but that they do not specify their own application, and this application is highly variable"



(1986: 312). It would appear that this perspective, as portrayed by Eickelman and Dresch, is far too casual, at least when applied to discursive models of segmentary lineage systems, and introduces a fatal amount of uncertainty to the model. If an observer cannot expect the segmentary lineage system to be a consistent model informing action, how can that observer hope to understand the action observed?<sup>70</sup>

In addition to this ideology problem, several ethnographers have developed the theme of tribe and state as opposing poles of identity in the Middle East and North Africa. A concentrated case of such treatments can be found in some of the papers submitted to the conference publication *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Khoury and Kostiner, eds. 1990). Many contributors to that volume argued that ‘tribes’ are not clearly bounded political entities, though they are referred to as polities or sociopolitical communities (Tapper 1990: 51; Beck 1990: 189). They also argue that kinship is not an important guide to behavior in ‘tribes’ (Khoury and Kostiner 1990: 5) and that ‘tribe’ should not be thought of as a type of society at all (Tapper 1990: 62). Rather tribe is a “mode of thought” (ibid: 68) or an “imagined identity” (Beck 1990: 189) opposite to the state. Such positions completely obscure the legacy of segmentary

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<sup>70</sup> Let me explain the problem in another way. In reference to figures 2.1 and 2.2, if “a man from A... killing a man from B... is not necessarily taken up as a ‘killing between [A] and [B]’” (Dresch 1986: 312) it is essential to understand why. If the segmentary system defined above does not always supply the moral context for actions, then how can we be confident that it is a reliable model at all? The initial problem that Peters observed for the Bedouin of Cyrenaica remains, and though it has been slightly attenuated, it still poses an existential problem for the theory. It is, of course, relevant to ask how Dresch knows that the killing is *not* “taken up as a ‘killing between [A] and [B]’” (ibid). If it is simply because it does not elicit an expected mobilization of segments A and B, this is not contradictory to the model, as the model does not prescribe behavior, but rather supplies its moral context, as Dresch point out. It is possible that his observation is wrong. The affront to honor may be satisfied by any number of circumstances which may or may not be clear to the observer. Segmentary lineage theory may be entirely consistent with the observed behavior. Eickelman described the difference with reference to formal and practical ideologies. These terms are equivalent with Giddens’ discursive and practical consciousness. For Eickelman, tribes are defined by their explicit, or formal reference to a segmentary lineage ideology, but other structures remain practical considerations and, though not explicitly referenced, still guide behavior. As discussed above, these perspectives overlook the importance of *cultural change* as a factor accounting for the disjuncture between discursive ideology and actual practice.

lineage systems in these regions. The related arguments that ‘tribes’ are not discrete political entities, and are not formed on a basis of lineal descent appeal either to ‘tribal’ types outside of the Middle East (Crone 1993: 357), which are tribal only in the evolutionary sense that they lie between bands and states, or to various sedentary ‘tribesmen’ within the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>71</sup> As is sometimes the case from ethnographic perspectives, the above critiques overlook the significance of culture change on contemporary mobile pastoral societies in the Middle East and, ironically, given the name of the book, do not consider the effect that modern nation states have had on their transformation. The conference proceedings volume might just as easily have been titled *States and Tribe Formation in the Middle East*. The result of this lack of perspective has been a lack of appreciation for the significance of segmentary lineage structures and their association with mobile pastoralism.

## **Conclusion**

The review of segmentary lineage systems and ‘tribalism’ provided in this chapter has demonstrated that the rejection of these systems as valid sociopolitical models results primarily for two reasons. The first of these is the relationship between segmentary lineage systems and the term ‘tribe’, the evolutionary connotations of which has served to continually obscure the reality of these systems and their relationship with Middle Eastern and North African societies. The second source relates specifically to ethnographic practice, being both the inadequate application of a segmentary lineage

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<sup>71</sup> The relationship between tribalism and mobility will be discussed thoroughly in Chapter 3, but it suffices to say that casting such a wide net to search for tribal features, and then failing to find any, borders on tautology. How sedentary and non-sedentary ‘tribespeople’ differ is an empirical question and their direct equation should not be taken as an assumption. Tribalism must be defined deductively. The continued legacy of ‘tribe’ in Neo-evolutionary models of society is addressed in the excursus following this chapter.

system to the Nuer, and the unsatisfactory explanations of the contradiction between discursive sociopolitical models and actual sociopolitical action observed among North African and Middle Eastern groups. The explanation of this contradiction in this chapter by reference to Giddens's theory of structuration suggests that segmentary lineage systems are a potentially valid sociopolitical model and cannot be rejected *a priori* by reference only to contemporary ethnographic sources. Instead, the existence of such systems and reasons for such contradictions must be sought empirically and considered within an historical context. The relationship between segmentary lineage systems and mobile pastoralism has not yet been directly addressed. This is the task of the following chapter. The elucidation of a segmentary lineage model and the appreciation for its relationship with mobile pastoralism developed in this and the following chapter provide this dissertation with a unique perspective to apply to issues of mobility, pastoralism, and sociopolitical development in EBA Syria. It will be argued that mobility and pastoralism cannot be detected in either the archaeological or historical records of this period. Nevertheless, the elucidation of the segmentary lineage model and its establishment as a potentially relevant model is a necessary first step to establishing the absence of such evidence pertaining to EBA Syria.

## **Excursus**

### **‘Tribe’ Since the Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Beyond Middle Eastern and North African contexts, ‘tribe’ was complicated further when it was re-employed for a special evolutionary use again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Neo-evolutionists re-associated it with the concept of segmentation, but only as it had been developed by Durkheim from the original evolutionary models. The legacy of these theoretical developments, and the conflation of neo-evolutionary tribes as universal stages of cultural development with true segmentary lineage societies, further explains the shape taken by many ethnographic, ethnological and archaeological discussions in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Tribe in Neo-Evolutionary Theory**

#### *The Sources of Neo-Evolutionary Theory*

The foundations of this neo-evolutionary model lie scattered through time from the initial evolutionary models of the 18<sup>th</sup> century up to the late 1940s and 1950s. Its proximate catalysts were two American ethnologists: Leslie White and Julian Steward. White, unsatisfied with the historical particularism of the Boas school, sought to rejuvenate the earlier evolutionary perspectives of Morgan and others by stressing the concept of general evolution—the idea that progress is a characteristic feature of culture without a specific set path to that development. Just as biological evolution was a law governing life in general, and was independent of any specific biological features, so general evolution sought to describe a specific tendency towards progress among all cultures. White understood cultures to be thermodynamic systems aimed at the

accumulation and processing of energy. He understood cultures as becoming more complex—more progressed, or more highly evolved—as they attained greater efficiency in harvesting energy. He represented this idea with the following formula:

$$E \times T = C \text{ (or Energy} \times \text{Technology} = \text{Culture) (1958: 368).}$$

White's emphasis on technology as the determining factor in social form and evolutionary progress clearly and deliberately paralleled the evolutionary paradigm of Morgan, as regards pre-state level societies in his scheme, discussed earlier. This resemblance also extends to the fundamental distinction between state and pre-state societies, the latter being distinct through their emphasis on kinship ties. White referred to those societies in a pre-state level of development as tribes and defined them thus:

In tribal society production, exchange, and consumption of wealth took place upon a personal, kinship basis; the economic organization was virtually identified with the kinship system. This type of economic organization worked well in a small society with a minimum division of labor and with little differentiation of social structure along occupational lines.

White 1958: 379

Steward shared many of White's methodological assumptions. He was also interested in divorcing a general concept of progress from the historical particularist treatments of specific cultures or culture areas. He felt that a general concept of progress would provide a useful cross-cultural method and could be defended from the Boasian attack that had been leveled so effectively at earlier evolutionary systems by allowing for historical diversity through what he called 'multilinear' evolution (1951). Instead of an understanding of culture as a thermodynamic system, Steward conceived of a hierarchical integration of various levels of sociocultural systems that characterized specific stages of progress in cultural development (1963).

Steward aimed his method at addressing two related problems in war-time and post-war anthropology. The first problem was the poor fit of a traditional anthropological sociocultural model for examining state societies. This traditional anthropological model, he argued, was more suited to the analysis of so-called ‘tribal’ societies that had smaller populations, fewer specialized institutions, and no specific subcultures (1951: 378). The second was the attitude of most anthropologists to the study of culture areas, which assumed cultural differences as qualitative differences, and differences in the sociocultural levels of integration as quantitative. To Steward’s mind, this assumption ignored the methodological utility of “the idea that ‘advanced’ cultures are differently integrated than ‘simple’ cultures” (1951: 379-80; cf. 1950: 106).

According to the principle of sociocultural sublevels, each higher sublevel is more complex than the lower ones not only in the qualitative sense that it has more parts but, as in biological sublevels, that it has qualitatively novel characteristics or unique properties which are not evident in or foreshadowed by the lower ones. That is, the new whole at each higher sublevel induces changes in the very nature of the parts and creates new relationships between the parts and to the whole.

Steward 1951: 110

The development of a model that would take into consideration these differences in levels of sociocultural integration, Steward argued, would contribute to cross-cultural approaches of study (1951: 380).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Unlike White, Steward completely rejected any connection between his model and the evolutionary models of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: “it is utterly fallacious to conceive of any developmental continuum of social types as representing a sequence of stages through which all mankind passed” (1950: 113). Steward argued that his model escaped the fallacy of earlier evolutionary models through a biological analogy: “In biology, the concept that higher levels of life have different organizing principles than lower ones is in no way concerned with the evolution of particular life forms...” (1951: 380). What Steward essentially argued is that independent of the specific features of a culture, societies organized at similar levels of sociocultural integration would tend to resemble one another in the way that their levels integrated. This argument is not altogether different from White’s own insistence on cultural progress as independent of specific cultural features, but whereas White argued for a distinction between the process of cultural evolution, independent of any specific cultural features, and history, which engaged with those specificities, Steward refused to separate them. Related to these different perspectives, White privileged technology—independent of specific cultural features—in his understanding of progress (e.g. 1949: 365), while Steward understood ecology—of essential significance to specific cultural features—to be a determining factor.

Steward identified three discrete levels of integration: the nuclear family, the folk society, which is elsewhere equated with simple, or tribal societies (e.g. 1951: 382, 1963: 44-47), and a state level of integration (1950: 112, 1951: 382-83, 1963: 54-55). All of these levels can be present in a given society and the existence of any one presumes also the existence many previous levels which have been reorganized into the new whole. Depending upon the maximal level of sociocultural integration, according to Steward's model, each subsidiary level will have a specific function, broadly comparable in any two societies which are organized to the same maximal extent (1951: 379). It would presumably be possible to refer to any society in reference to its level of maximum sociocultural integration, such as a tribe or state. In fact, Steward avoided 'tribe', noting the semantic difficulty of the term (1950: 112). This caution with tribe is continually reiterated, Steward once calling it "an exceedingly ill-defined catch-all," (1951: 381) and elsewhere noting that

there are no attributes of a 'tribe' that are found among all preliterate, primitive people... [it] really has negative connotations. 'Tribes' lack state organization, class structure, literacy, and other features commonly ascribed to 'civilized' societies — that is, features representing a higher level of sociocultural integration — but there are *no* features shared by tribes that are common to all mankind.

Steward 1963: 44, note 3

Nevertheless, in both of these later publications the term is used throughout to refer to a society organized beyond the level of a nuclear family, but beneath the level of a state, and it is once equated with the concept of folk societies (1951: 381) which are later described as commonly taking the form of "an extended kin group of some kind" (1951: 382). Even though Steward stressed the nature of these levels as being arranged like a continuum (e.g. 1950: 112), he used folk society and tribe as equivalent terms to describe the vast space in-between the nuclear family and the state, which he understood as

characterizing previous anthropological models of culture. Because of his understanding that states arose only from development trajectories that had their origins in a specific ecological condition—aridity—Steward’s multilinear allowance for the particular development of any given society was actually reserved for the space in-between the nuclear family and the state. In other words, developmental and particular diversity was characteristic of *tribal* societies, not (at least not necessarily) of the trajectory of the state-level of sociocultural integration. In fact, Steward has been criticized for being essentially unilinear in his approach, despite his emphasis on multi-linearity, because he understood civilization as essentially arising only out of arid regions, following in broad outlines Karl Wittfogel’s hydraulic hypothesis (Trigger 1998: 129).

For both Steward and White, then, tribe was a word that characterized a vaguely intermediary level or range of levels in a general evolutionary scheme, precursory to the state. For Steward, it was characterized by a great degree of variability, but nevertheless often organized on a kinship basis. White’s use of the term tribe had a more explicit kinship basis. Their employment of the term tribe was a reflection of its use following the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century evolutionary models, especially after their adoption by Marx and Engels, and corresponding to Durkheim’s segmentary societies.

### *Tribe as a general evolutionary stage*

A great deal of technical specificity—and as a consequence later, ambiguity—was imparted to the term by the work of two of White’s students: Elman Service and Marshall Sahlins. Service and Sahlins developed an evolutionary approach to culture change that



integrated the perspectives of both Steward and White (Sahlins and Service 1961).<sup>73</sup>

Sahlins and Service also sought to synthesize White's distinction of evolution and history with the particularistic Boasian approach in America, and the British structural functionalist aversion to subjective ethnographic histories (Sahlins and Service 1961: 43).<sup>74</sup> Sahlins and Service felt themselves to be on firm methodological ground for their evolutionary perspective. Key to their approach, and setting it apart from other earlier neo-evolutionary theories in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, was the distinction between evolution and history that they adopted from White, and explained in a more intellectually palatable way. This important distinction is perhaps most clearly illustrated in Sahlins's discussion of the shortcoming of Steward's own 'multilinear' evolutionary model. The very idea of multilinearity, to Sahlins, demonstrates the confusion of specific cultural adaptations with that of general evolutionary progress. General evolution, by its very nature, will be characterized by universal stages. Together with the adoption of Steward's concept of

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<sup>73</sup> Although they adopted White's thermodynamic conception of cultural progress, they rejected the notion that thermodynamic *efficiency* characterized progress, and instead argued that thermodynamic *throughput* alone is the relevant criteria (Sahlins 1961a). Lacking any easy method for measuring this throughput in a consistent and cross-cultural way, they instead substituted Steward's levels of sociocultural integration as an index of progress, finding levels to be the "organizational counterpart" of thermodynamic throughput (Sahlins 1961a: 35).

<sup>74</sup> They branded the former perspective as general evolution and the latter two as specific evolution (Sahlins 1961a: 13), a "twofold view" of social evolution that they traced back to Tylor (Sahlins and Service 1961: 4). They described this distinction with reference to a similar distinction found in biology. Specific evolution, in terms of both biology and culture, describes the process of adaptation from a species or culture-specific point of view. It is related to species and cultural specialization, and therefore diversification. It is suited to phylogenetic taxonomy (Sahlins 1961a: 14-16). "Specific evolution is 'descent with modification,' the adaptive variation of life 'along its many lines'... The advance or improvement we see in specific evolution is relative to the adaptive problem" (1961a: 22). General evolution, on the other hand, does not apply to a close-up, particularist perspective. It characterizes "stages or levels of development without reference to phylogeny", on the basis of their "ability to concentrate energy in the organism, to put energy to work building and maintaining structure" (1961a: 21). To illustrate this, Sahlins drew on a biological example: the primates. While the four types of primates can be divided along phylogenetic lines, they can also be arranged in terms of general evolutionary progress from prosimian, to New World monkeys, to Old World monkeys and finally to apes, at the top. "Although the sequence is a violation of phylogeny, it aids in understanding other consequences of evolution" (1961a: 18). Just as "a man is more highly developed than a mouse," (1961a: 18) regardless of their phylogenetic relationship, then so too may be human cultures. This is precisely why Sahlins and Service rejected White's notion of thermodynamic efficiency. Efficiency is relative to adaptive specialization. Therefore, a man is more developed than a mouse, regardless of any specific adaptive context.

sociocultural levels of integration, the Sahlins and Service approach to cultural evolution was able to avoid many of the problems that had beset the earlier evolutionists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their approach was widely accepted, but ultimately the models derived from it were also criticized on empirical grounds relative to the distinctions drawn between their general stages of development.

Their now familiar four-stage model of general evolution consisted of, in lowest to highest order, band, tribe, chiefdom, and state.<sup>75</sup>

On the primitive level, the unsegmented (except for families) and chiefless bands are least advanced—and characteristically, preagricultural. More highly developed are... tribes segmented into clans, lineages, and the like... Higher than such egalitarian tribes, and based on greater productivity, are chiefdoms with internal status differentiation... Similarly, within the level of civilization we can distinguish the archaic form... from the more highly developed, more territorially and culturally integrated nation state, with its industrial technology.

Sahlins 1961a: 37

Service and Sahlins' understanding of levels of sociocultural integration very neatly matched that of Steward and Durkheim's segmentary societies. The basic, fundamental unit of organization in all human society was that of the nuclear family, which was then combined into increasingly larger and more organized cultural systems as one progressed up the scale of general evolutionary progress. Later, the co-residential group would become the focus of discussion as another fundamental unit of integration (Service 1971: 12). Most of these levels made wide use of kinship as an organizing principle. In this way, the model also referred very specifically to the evolutionary models of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reviving the fundamental division between *societas* and *civitas* in the division between primitive society—band, tribe and, chiefdom—associated with kinship

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<sup>75</sup> Sahlins would later distinguish his model from Service's, understanding the chiefdom only as a "developed expression" of it, which "anticipates statehood in its complexities" (1968: 20).

organization, from civilization, as represented by the state, in both its modern and archaic forms (1961a: 36).

Service and Sahlins understood tribes, as opposed to the preceding level, bands, to be structurally different in terms of additional levels of integration above that of the family, or co-residential unit. Compared to bands, then, “a tribe is a larger, more segmented society” (Sahlins 1961b: 323). These segments are usually family groups, each duplicates of one another. They are loosely organized and tend to be autonomous from the rest of the tribe, economically and politically. Sahlins described these larger groups then as being held together by mechanical solidarity “and by pan-tribal institutions” (1961b: 325), which Service referred to as sodalities (1971: 102). Like bands, and unlike chiefdoms, tribes lack any sort of permanent political organization. They can, however, “unite to attack or repel an enemy,” (Sahlins 1961b: 326). Political consolidation, then, is based on circumstance. In the absence of any outside pressure to defend common interests, the segments that constitute a tribe will exist in a state of disunity and may feud among themselves (ibid; Service 1971: 103).

To Service and Sahlins, tribes owed their very existence to the circumstances that select for and make pan-tribal sodalities adaptively advantageous. Service called these conditions environmental and divided them into “(a) the natural (organic and inorganic) environment and (b) the presence of competing societies, the superorganic environment” (1971: 102). The natural conditions that favor tribalism are those that are conducive to the presence of domesticated plants and animals, which were more effective subsistence strategies than simple foraging alone. For this reason, Service and Sahlins connected the tribal level of general evolution with the Neolithic Revolution (1971: 99; Sahlins 1961b:

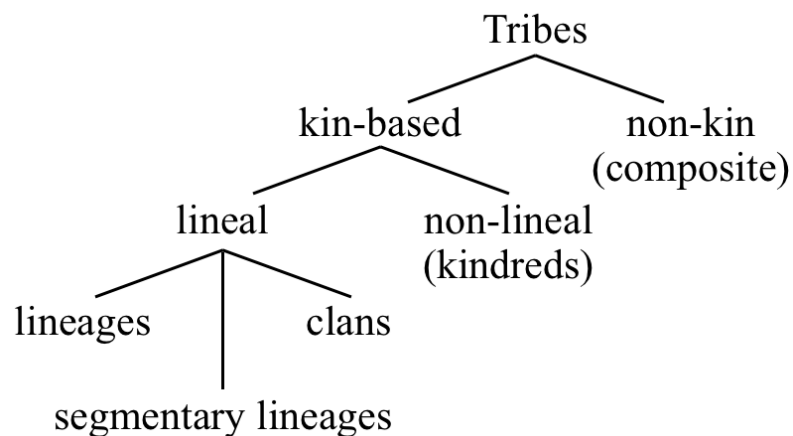
323). It is also for this reason that Service and Sahlins justified the study of contemporary tribal societies as representative of past instances of tribal levels of sociocultural integration, at least in general evolutionary terms (1971: 7-8). The aspects of the superorganic environment that selected for pan-tribal sodalities were the presence of other tribes and bands in competition for limited resources (Service 1971: 103). The existence of a tribal level of integration, then, depended upon pan-tribal sodalities that were selected for primarily in cases of inter-group competition, when the external pressures on a tribal society were strong enough to overcome the centrifugal force of competition between internal segments (ibid). According to the shared model of Sahlins and Service, tribes are conglomerations of band-like segments united by pan-tribal sodalities, normally understood to be rationalized on the basis of kinship,<sup>76</sup> which exist for the purpose of inter-group competition for resources. This then is a model of tribes in terms of a scale of general, universal evolutionary progress.

Service and Sahlins also discussed the range of specific features that tribal societies may take on. Service, specifically, created a detailed taxonomy of tribal types. This is depicted diagrammatically in figure 2.6, below. He divided tribal sodalities into two kinds, kinship and non-kinship (1971: 105). Among the kinship sodalities there are “the clan, the kindred, and the rarer segmentary lineage,” while “non-kinship sodalities include such associations as age-grades, and warrior and ceremonial societies” (ibid). Tribal societies without a dominant kin-based sodality are also referred to as composite tribes. Service understood these non-kin forms to be an evolutionarily derivative form, resulting from the warping of an initially kin-based structure by colonial forces. Possible

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<sup>76</sup> Here we see that the old opposition between kinship and territoriality, and the impulse to associate pre- and non-state societies with the former is reflected also by Service and Sahlins’ Band-Tribe-Chiefdom-State model.

vectors of disturbance might include depopulation, resource base disturbance, and acculturation (1971: 126-27). Among the kin-based tribes, those with non-lineal sodalities, he referred to both as cognatic groups, (1971: 125) and kindreds (1971: 128). These kindreds were characterized by groups whose members are nonlocal, and may be composed of relatives from both the mother's and father's lineage (1971: 124). Service proposed this sort of situation arising from an initially lineal group, which is bounded by environmental variables and unable to expand. Free association of individuals among segments would then allow for the more even distribution of individuals among resources (1971: 124-25).<sup>77</sup>



**Figure 2.6. Taxonomy of tribal structures according to Service 1971<sup>78</sup>**

Service spent the majority of his discussion of tribal structural typology on lineal tribal societies, which he understood to be the original tribal type.<sup>79</sup> The first form of

<sup>77</sup> Here Service allowed also for a tribal type which mixes features of both lineal and cognatic types, with “a core of permanent inhabitants of a region who are related lineally, but other kinds of relatives join this nucleus for long periods as resources are needed by them or leave when resources are scarce... The permanent core would seem to have certain powers or rights greater than the impermanent families...” (1971: 126). Although he did not cite it as an example, his description fits perfectly the Nuer as described by Evans Pritchard in 1940, and he must have had it in mind when composing this passage.

<sup>78</sup> The form of the figure is not meant to imply any phylogenetic connection between the structural variants, only to organize them logically.

lineal sodalities he discussed are *lineages*. Membership in tribes with lineage sodalities is determined unilineally through either the paternal or maternal line. The lineage is not a genealogical descent group, but rather it is formulated on the basis of a common ideology of shared ancestry (1971: 112). The lineage is also the primary residential group. Exogamous marriage ensures that the group is always made up of lineage mates and their spouses (1971: 113). “Often the lineage has a highly corporate character, holding land and perhaps other property in common, settling the grievances of its members, collaborating in labor, sharing and storing food, and so on” (1971: 113). The most common type of lineage sodality, Service asserted, is the *clan*. He understood the clan to be an exogamous unit with membership conferred through a common ideology of shared descent, just as the lineage (1971: 105-7, 112).<sup>80</sup> Unlike the lineage sodality, however, the clan was not conceived of as a residential group and was not defined on a territorial basis. The precise functions of clans in tribal societies vary, but according to Service they often operate as corporate legal units, functioning “to preserve peaceful relations among [their] members... and punish wrongs in relations between members of different clans” (1971: 116).

The last type of lineage sodality discussed in Service’s taxonomic typology is the segmentary lineage system. To Service, the segmentary lineage system is also based upon kinship and descent, but in opposition to lineages and clans, this system is more

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<sup>79</sup> In fact, figure 2.7 could be re-drawn with the lineal types at the base and cognatic and composite types branching off in a quasi-phylogenetic relationship, however this admixture of general and specific principles of evolution would probably not be satisfactory for either Service or Sahlins.

<sup>80</sup> Service speculated that one might find the origin of patri- or matrilineal clans in tribal societies in patri- or matrilineal bands which, on growth and territorial dispersion lost their territorial associations but retained it in terms of common ancestry because it served a pan-tribally unifying role in the face of some competitive pressure (1971: 107). This can be understood to be an example of the phenomenon Steward argued for, where due to increasingly higher levels of development, lower levels of integration are taken on a new function.

specifically genealogical “and the lineages maintain a set of varying relations to each other with respect to putative genealogical distance” (ibid). Just like the previous forms, this case, too, comes with a hypothetical circumstance of origin. In a situation where a local kin group fissions into two segments due to territorial expansion, the two segments may still understand themselves to be kin, “a higher-order lineage composed of two lower-order lineages” (ibid). As growth continues and lineage groups are continually subdivided, co-residency gives way to a system where genealogical distance between segments reflects their previous relationships in space and time (1971: 117). “The whole tribe... is a system of the more closely related lineages allied as segments of a conceptualized higher-order lineage, which in turn is allied with others of that order into a still larger, more dispersed lineage of still higher, more abstract order” (ibid).

Sahlins (1961b) sought to explain the appearance of the segmentary lineage system in tribes in terms of its apparent function. Drawing largely on the work of Evans-Pritchard among the Nuer<sup>81</sup> and Laura (1958) and Paul (1954a, 1954b, 1958) Bohannon (1953) among the Tiv, he argued that the segmentary lineage system comes about in a situation of intertribal competition. Because tribal structures lack permanent unifying political authority, the segmentary lineage system was understood to be “a social means of temporary consolidation of this fragmented tribal polity for concerted external action. It is, in a sense, a substitute for the fixed political structure which a tribal society is incapable of sustaining” (1961b: 342). Sahlins also assumed that this highly organized structure was an ephemeral characteristic of tribal society, eventually destined to revert to simpler segmentation when not in a situation of competition (ibid). Service’s own

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<sup>81</sup> Although he classified them together with the Tiv, Sahlins noted that the Nuer are not the perfect example, because their lineage system “cuts off below the level of the Nuer as a people” (1961b: 328). This in some ways foreshadows the later criticisms of Kuper and others.

discussion is largely a summary of Sahlins original argument (1971: 118).<sup>82</sup> However, implicit in his understanding of the balance of centrifugal and centripetal forces in tribal systems is the notion that all tribal sodalities are emergent features of competition and so segmentary lineage systems are not unique in this respect.

The Band-Tribe-Chiefdom-State model imparted a new, specific meaning to the use of tribe and tribalism in anthropological literature. As in the mid-to-late 19th century, tribe was still a universal level of general evolution, but now it was conceived of as having many different taxonomic variations. Nevertheless, these were still largely understood to be organized on the basis of kinship, in this way preserving the earlier distinction between *societas* and *civitas*. Whereas for Steward tribe encapsulated a wide range of levels of sociocultural integration between the nuclear family and the state, now it had a much more specific meaning. It applied to societies which were segmentary in terms similar to bands, but with segments united through pan-tribal sodalities. These sodalities imparted an aspect of political resilience necessary for tribal societies to compete with one another, and outcompete band societies. Politically, tribes were also characterized by the lack of any institutionalized type of political authority, a feature which emerged with chiefdoms. Tribes, then, occupied the space between egalitarian bands, with a few hundred individuals associated by means of co-residency, and chiefdoms, with institutionalized political stratification.

Segmentary lineage systems in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were again understood as a universal stage of human society. In the neo-evolutionary models of Sahlins and Service

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<sup>82</sup> Service's 1971 revision of *Primitive Social Organization* mentions only the Tiv in connection to segmentary lineage systems, but does preserve a footnoted reference to Evans Pritchard where "Discussions of the segmentary lineage may be found" (ibid: 118n5). Presumably, Service was influenced by dissatisfaction with Evans-Pritchard's segmentary lineage system *as applied to* the Nuer, though not as an abstract concept.



they became but one taxonomic type in a general stage. Their treatment of segmentary lineage systems as a specific taxonomic type reflects their assumption that tribal systems, in the terms they define them, are universal societies. In terms of the evolutionary approach Service and Sahlins presented, it is implicit that taxonomic types are phylogenetically dependent, and therefore specific to historically and geographically situated lineages—in its phylogenetic sense—of cultural development. However, their functionalist explanation of segmentary lineage systems seems to imply the opposite. Their understanding of segmentary lineage systems was clearly influenced by Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer, which itself projected the segmentary lineage model of Robertson-Smith and contemporary Middle Eastern ethnographers from their subject societies onto the Nuer. Both the Nuer and segmentary lineage systems would be more profitably understood without conflating the two. Without entering into a debate on the relative merits of an evolutionary approach to culture change, it suffices here to say that segmentary lineage systems, regardless of any other distribution in time and space, clearly do operate in the Middle East and North Africa, have characterized some societies in that area for millennia, and were the original models of 'tribe' in its academic use in English.

The widespread effect of Sahlins and Service's understanding of tribal society on the term as it has been used among archaeologists since, was a result of the revolutionary effect of the New Archaeology in America. Neo-evolutionary perspectives amongst ethnologists in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century played a role in the adoption of Processualism amongst American archaeologists. This 'New Archaeology' was concerned with establishing cross-cultural laws of behavior and stressed the importance of endogamous

sources of social change as opposed to diffusion. Neo-evolutionary levels of general evolution provided a convenient and compelling cross-cultural framework upon which to build that methodology. All four levels of the band-tribe-chiefdom-state model found fast and widespread adoption. Although 'tribe' often still found use in archaeological literature as an ambiguous cultural unit, the understanding of tribe also as a stage between hunter/gatherer bands and the beginning of political stratification was pervasive. Although this Processualism was largely an American phenomenon, this understanding of the tribe was not confined to the New World, but instead diffused throughout the world, wherever American archaeologists were working, including the Middle East.

#### *Tribes as a secondary phenomenon*

Soon after the advent of the New Archaeology, the use of tribe in ethnological and archaeological literature was affected both by competing versions of the general evolutionary model and growing dissatisfaction with neo-evolutionary methodology. One of the most important criticisms in terms of the use of the term tribe was launched by Morton Fried, a neo-evolutionist with a competing model. Within ethnological and ethnographic circles his argument resulted in the general avoidance of the term altogether.<sup>83</sup> Fried argued that tribal societies, in the terms of Sahlins and Service, were not a general evolutionary stage, but were rather a secondary product resulting from the formation of states (1975). His argument can be understood to have been foreshadowed in Service's discussion of composite non-kin and cognatic non-lineal tribes as colonial adulterations of lineal types (1971: 126-27). Fried cited similar observations among

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<sup>83</sup> At the same time, the category of chieftdom was also in crisis, threatening to hollow out the four-stage model of general evolutionary theory into a husk of its former self with hunter-gatherer bands on one end, urban, agricultural states on the other, and chaos in-between.

other scholars as well (e.g. Fried 1975: 59, 105). In his brief monograph, *The Notion of Tribe*, Fried challenged a number of meanings that had been applied to the term in its primary sense. First, he argued, a tribe is not a breeding population: “Evidence of a relatively easy flow of marriage partners from one tribe to another abounds” (1975: 21). Nor is a tribe a linguistic unity: “The idea that tribes, whatever else they may be, are somehow minimal speech communities, turns out to be no sounder than the notion that they are basic breeding populations” (1975: 30). The existence of tribes is not indicated simply by the existence of a named group (1975: 38), nor is there an economic system that is specifically tribal (1975: 39). Groups traditionally identified as tribes do not exist at a tribal level, politically: “The concept of tribe has been used in connection with totally acephalous organization and with command structures at the veritable level of kingdoms, or least emirates...” (1975: 65). Nor do they have discrete functions as regards the maintenance of peace or the making of war (1975: 72). Most significantly, Fried insisted that tribes are not stages in political evolution on the way to state societies: “The pristine states originated as city-states or at least as fairly tight townships, not as precipitates of closely defined tribes” (1975: 98). Instead, Fried proposed “The precipitation of tribes... was triggered by the emergence of the state, but did not really get into high gear until the emergence of the ancient empires and, later in a greater burst, after the appearance of colonialism and imperialism” (ibid).

By all of this, Fried did not mean to argue that non-state societies existed in conditions of complete anarchy, but rather that their form was highly variable, very loosely knit, and lacking in clear political, social, or economic boundaries (1975: 76). He understood them as having been organized around core groups with ideologies of

common descent (1975: 77). Nevertheless, he is critical also of uses of the term tribe to indicate a culturally homogenous unit (1975: 87). Instead, Fried insisted that tribes, where they can be determined to exist at all, resulted only from the pressure of state societies on non-state societies:

Secondary tribalism is a political phenomenon bearing little resemblance to conventional notions of tribal behavior. It occurs... largely as a reaction to the presence of one or more states. It is often goal-directed, although the ends of the group are several, at various levels of consciousness and explication. Secondary tribes are heterogeneous... some being extensively composite, comprising elements of population that previously were separated by considerable physical distances and great cultural distances as well...

Secondary tribalism takes different forms and appears in various guises in the political processes of states new and old. It may parallel the development of political parties or manifest itself in bloc politics.

Fried 1975: 103-104

Tribes, in Fried's estimation, are essentially culturally heterogeneous groups, without predictable political structure, forced together by shared interests that place them in opposition to a majority group in a state-level society. Furthermore, to Fried's mind, this process parallels the creation of *any* social unit with shared political interests. In this way, his understanding of secondary tribes is nothing more than the general concept of segmentation, in its widest sociological sense, applied to a specific post-colonial, quasi-ethnic context. This segmentary meaning explicit in Fried's opinion, above, is paralleled by the contemporary vernacular use of the term.

Fried's critique came with the background of growing dissatisfaction with the four-stage model of general evolution. A sense that the model did not adequately capture or order the amount of variation present in human societies was present since its introduction and had only been growing in the 1960s and 70s (e.g. Godelier 1973; Helms 1979). In fact, in 1968, Sahlins himself abandoned the division between tribes and

chiefdoms, preferring to see them as “but polar permutations of the tribal design” (27). Other attempts to redefine the categories or re-draw their boundaries are common in the literature around this time (e.g. Goldman 1970; Renfrew 1973; Taylor 1975; Helms 1979).<sup>84</sup> For this reason, Fried’s argument was especially compelling to his academic audience. Though Fried himself was a neo-evolutionist with a competing model of general evolution, his rejection of the category of primary tribes was embraced by pro- and anti-evolutionists alike (e.g. Renfrew 1982; Colson 1986). Indeed, it would have been difficult for either side to ignore his accusation that the term tribe was a pejorative, “no matter what the intention of the speaker” (1975: 8).

Most affected by the simultaneous rejection of both tribe and chiefdom were the ethnologists and archaeologists seeking to deal cross-culturally with those suddenly taxonomically slippery societies occupying the space between bands and states. The most widely used terms that appeared in the wake of Fried’s attack attempting to overcome the lack of specificity and moral unacceptability of tribe were ‘middle-range society’ (e.g. Feinman and Neitzel 1984) and later ‘transegalitarian society’ (e.g. Owens and Hayden 1997). None of these terms were able to actually confer any useful specificity lacking in tribe. These societies were simply included in these categories by default. They were clearly not band-level societies, nor were they states. These terms simply reflected the difficulty of placing them in any meaningful category. A ‘tribal taboo’ remained in vogue for some time, and continues still to this day in some corners of anthropology.

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<sup>84</sup> The most contentious stage by far has been the chiefdom, and it has been suggested that one of the failings of this stage in particular was that it was too dependent upon specific features drawn from the Polynesian societies with which Service and Sahlins were most familiar (Trigger 1998: 130).

The situation has been different among archaeologists, most of whom preserved the term tribe along with the three other stages of the four-stage neo-evolutionary model. To some extent this is because it quickly diffused throughout archaeological discourse as a result of its adoption by the Processual movement, but it remained for the simple reason that these stages served a methodological purpose—they were a convenient and familiar shorthand. Despite acknowledged shortcomings, the terms facilitated cross-cultural and diachronic comparisons of archaeological cultures (e.g. Rothman 1994: 1-4). There have been periodic attempts by archaeologists to rehabilitate the term tribe. Justification usually comes from the conviction that because the term exists at all, it must have or have had some useful meaning (e.g. Godelier 1973: 4). Frequently these *rehabilitierungsversuchen* take the form of a new methodological approach, coupled with a renewed analysis of a set of societies somewhere “*Between Bands and States*” (Gregg 1991) in search of a universal feature that can characterize the essence of ‘Tribalism’. For example, a recent attempt led by Parkinson (Parkinson, ed. 2002) identified this trait as Durkheimian segmentation (Parkinson 2002: 8), in much the same manner as Fried, above. Parkinson and colleagues overcame the post-colonial limitation that Fried enforced on tribalism with the conviction that the sorts of relationships thought to create tribal societies could have existed throughout history and prehistory, preceding the European colonial period.<sup>85</sup> Parkinson and his colleague, Severin Fowles, argued that tribes can be understood best by the variability of their “structural poses over time” (Fowles 2002: 22).<sup>86</sup> In practice, their characterization of tribal society really diverges very little from the four-stage model (e.g. Carneiro 2002). Even when archaeologists

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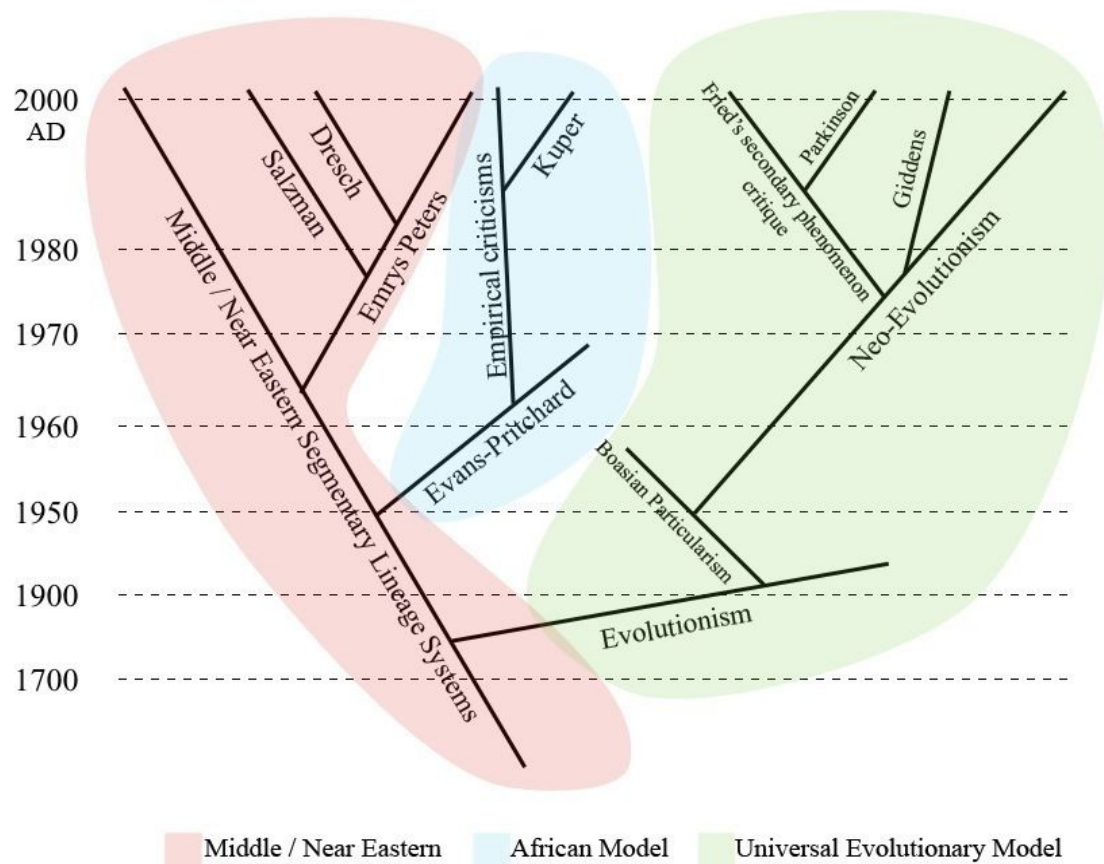
<sup>85</sup> Fried did specifically confine the phenomenon of tribalism to this period.

<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Anatoly Khazanov stressed that social processes in nomadic pastoral segmentary systems are “reversible” (1984: 147).

have explicitly rejected the Service-Sahlins four-stage model of general evolution, empirically, methodologically, or more frequently both, the discipline is still anchored by a foundation of historical materialism, and time has shown this to seemingly guarantee that some similar, cross-cultural model will always be required for archaeological explications of culture change, whether uni- or multilinear (e.g. Yoffee 1993; Feinman and Neitzel 1984).

### **Conclusion: A Phylogeny of ‘Tribe’**

The derived meanings of tribalism and the associated intellectual developments that have been discussed in this chapter can be depicted diagrammatically in phylogenetic form as in figure 2.7, below. It has been argued in this chapter that the original and most useful understanding of tribe is as a type of society—one might say polity—more or less politically unified with clear boundaries and characterized by segmentary lineage systems organized into a nested hierarchy of descent groups such as is represented in figure 2.1, with segments operating on a principle of balanced opposition to protect their ‘honor’, i.e. to maintain equivalent rights and access to resources relative to other tribal segments of equivalent order. The first deviation from this model came with the development of an evolutionary approach to human history. This approach is associated with the progressive movement emerging from the Age of Enlightenment in Europe. At this time tribalism was understood to be a universal stage of cultural evolution. At first, ancient Near Eastern segmentary lineage systems from biblical sources served as the basis for this tribal category, but eventually the addition of other historical and ethnographic societies unrelated to these forms began to divorce this association. Tribe then was used



**Figure 2.7. An etymological phylogeny of 'tribe'**

simply as a unit of ethnographic analysis, applied to any society understood as being 'primitive'. This meaning was promoted through the empirical challenge to tribe as an evolutionary category, emerging from American scholars in the early twentieth century. In the mid-twentieth century models of tribalism deriving from the neo-evolutionary approach such as that espoused by Sahlins and Service attempted to reform the category of tribe and place it on a surer empirical foundation. Ultimately, these models were also found to be unsatisfactory on empirical grounds. This had three results. First, Fried's attack made popular the idea that tribes result only as a secondary phenomenon to state societies. Second, the term tribalism again devolved to the general meaning of a primitive pre- or non-state society, such as it is used by Anthony Giddens. Third, as a



result of its usefulness in cross-cultural approaches, the terms associated with the four-stage model continue to persist in the archaeological literature, with periodic attempts at reformation of the various stages which serve to muddy the theoretical waters. A second major phylogenetic division, more recently split off from the Middle and Near Eastern tribal line relates to the African Model. It emerged when Evans-Pritchard inappropriately applied the segmentary lineage system into a sub-Saharan case study, the Nuer.

Although employing the term 'tribe' in a specialized way, the African Model served to re-introduce segmentary lineage systems with tribes in the sense of primitive non- or pre-state societies. Empirical dissatisfaction with this model, however, led not only to the rejection of the segmentary lineage model in the case of the Nuer, but also in general. A third branch may be understood as a synchronic sub-lineage of the Middle and Near Eastern segmentary tribal type. This branch owes its origin to Peters' 1967 article criticizing the segmentary lineage model, which was inspired both by his dissatisfaction with the model as well as his observation of its inadequacy in accounting for the social interactions of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica from 1948 to 1950. Salzman and Dresch pointed out some aspects of Peters' fundamental misunderstanding of the segmentary lineage system, but nevertheless shared with Peters a synchronic point of view that served to undermine their arguments for the observed ideological dissonance: the existence of additional structuring principles. The essential point, hopefully clear to the reader by this point, is that the cause of that dissonance is culture change precipitated by a break between the folk model of sociopolitical structure which defines moral actions and actual self-interest.

What this review has sought to make clear is that the tribe was originally, and still should be, understood as a society characterized by segmentary lineage systems organized into a nested hierarchy of unilinear descent such as is represented in figures 2.1 and 2.2, with segments operating on a principle of balanced opposition in an attempt to maintain equivalent rights and access to resources, which can be characterized as a principle of shared honor. This definition of tribalism is not a stereotype that seeks to discount or ignore cultural variation between different tribal societies. There is still room for variation, and these variations will be explored in Chapter 3. Despite this variation, commonalities of the tribal structure do result in regularities in responses to historical stimuli, which facilitate both the identification of tribal societies in the archaeological and historical records and their synthesis into an understanding of the historical processes at work in various periods.

It remains now to undertake an empirical examination for the cultural correlates of segmentary lineage systems, especially in relation to mobility and pastoralism, and to explain these structuring logic of these relationships. Once they are more fully appreciated, segmentary lineage systems can potentially be developed into fuller sociological and material models for application to the historical and archaeological records of EBA Syria. Ascertaining the presence or absence of segmentary lineage societies in these records can serve the purpose of illuminating certain aspects of changing economic and political systems of polities at that time.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Correlates of Segmentary Lineage Systems**

The previous chapter had two primary purposes—first to establish a definition for segmentary lineage systems and, second, to explain why segmentary lineage systems are commonly rejected out of hand as models of sociopolitical action. In this chapter, the relevance of segmentary lineage systems for the examination of mobile pastoralism in EBA Syria will be established through examination of the ethnographic record. This examination will demonstrate an empirical correlation between segmentary lineage systems and mobile pastoralism and, furthermore, it will suggest the logic underlying the correlation of the structuring principles of these systems with the ecological, economic, and political conditions of mobile pastoralism.

#### **Segmentary Lineage Systems and Mobility**

Common among scholars of the modern Middle and ancient Near East alike is the opinion that ‘tribalism’ and mobility correlate with one another in some way, whether they feel that the one necessitates the other, or whether they leave the association loose and unexplained. Among those that either reject any necessary connection altogether (e.g. Porter 2000: 50), or qualify it in some way, is found the conviction that there are, in the ethnographic present, groups in the Middle East and/or Central Asia that are both sedentary and tribal. So, for example, Tapper has summarized the state of affairs this way:

Strongly entrenched in academic and administrative thinking about tribes in many parts of the Middle East is the notion of tribe as the political dimension of pastoral nomadism, such that the category “the tribes” is conventionally synonymous with

“the nomads.”... Yet in many countries (such as Yemen, Afghanistan, and Algeria) major tribal groups were settled cultivators with little or no leaning towards pastoralism or nomadism.

Tapper 1990: 54

This apparent fact led Tapper to conclude, then, that “tribalism is more necessary to nomadism than nomadism to tribalism” (ibid). This conviction, however, rests upon an expansive and promiscuous use of ‘tribe’, deriving from all of its evolutionary ambiguity. Tapper defines tribe in broad terms, “as a basis for identity, political allegiance and behavior [that] gives primacy to ties of kinship and patrilineal descent... socially homogenous, egalitarian, and segmentary” (1990: 68). It precludes any special significance of mobile pastoralism *a priori* on the basis that sedentary societies have been labeled ‘tribes’. Important for Tapper’s definition is the complex—and ambiguous—relationship between tribe and state, which he argues “are best thought of as two opposed modes of thought or models of organization that form a single system” (ibid).<sup>87</sup> In other words, Tapper defines tribalism as a basis for identity that is political, kin-based, egalitarian, and with interests opposite the state, but nonetheless integrated into it. Such a definition surely encapsulates some aspect of almost every Middle Eastern and Central Asian society, and so what he essentially observes is that not all of these societies are nomadic. Tapper’s observation, nevertheless, stops far short of explaining this relationship and leaves the more interesting question of the structural significance of mobile pastoralism unasked.

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<sup>87</sup> The sentiment that the difference between tribe and state is more mental than physical is not uncommon among ethnographers. It has its basis in the structural differences between tribes and states. In other words, members of tribal societies and members of state societies act differently because the political and social rules that they have internalized are different. They, quite literally, see things differently. The idea that both of these systems contain within them a distinct structural logic guiding moral and political behavior has been running throughout this dissertation and it will be returned to again below.

In a similar way, Roger Cribb, attempting to account for *Nomads in Archaeology*, chose to define the tribe principally as “a territorial *system*, an organization for the control of territory” (1991a: 52-3; original emphasis), and one that was not unique to mobility or nomadism. Cribb was also skeptical of the segmentary lineage system. Although he acknowledged that “certain southwest Asian anthropologists... have correctly identified many of the features of the segmentary lineage system among nomadic pastoralists,” he nevertheless maintained that “they are mistaken in using such a model to account for nomadic territorial systems” (1991a: 53). While Cribb understood tribes as aggregates of segments, he stressed the fluidity of that social structure. The aggregates, he said, are “neither structurally nor functionally equivalent but formed on the basis of different criteria for different purposes and for the solution of different problems at each level” (ibid). In this way, Cribb dismissed the importance of segmentary lineage structures by conceiving of them as momentary crystallizations of “a system in a constant state of flux” (ibid), the actual contemporary divisions between lineages serving only “to trace out the lines of current territorial disputes” (1991a: 54).<sup>88</sup>

In light of the importance given here to the segmentary lineage system as a defining feature of some so-called ‘tribal’ societies, it is necessary to evaluate examples of such societies in order to investigate empirically the possibility of a relationship between mobility and segmentary lineage systems. There is neither room nor time in this context to evaluate them all nor, in light of previous work, is such a review entirely

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<sup>88</sup> Like Tapper, Cribb’s explanation of tribalism is unsatisfying and is built upon an underlying flaw—dismissing the structural significance of segmentary lineage systems. In both cases, this dismissal results from the contradiction between discursive models and actual sociopolitical actions among contemporary Middle Eastern and North African societies. Cribb, like Tapper, only provided a few sparsely-cited examples of a wider class of sedentary tribes, “ranging from sedentary Kurdish mountain villagers to Berber citrus cultivators to Marsh Arabs” (1991a: 53).

necessary.<sup>89</sup> A sample of two allegedly tribal societies from the Middle East will be reviewed below. These reviews demonstrate that when segmentary lineage systems correlate positively with mobility, such that Tapper's statement concerning the relationship between tribalism and nomadism could be paraphrased and reversed: nomadism (mobility) is necessary to tribalism (segmentary lineage systems), though not *vice versa*.

### *The Yomut Turkmen*

From December 1965 to November 1967 the Yomut Turkmen were the subject of ethnographic research carried out by William Irons (1974; 1975). At that time, the Yomut were "organized into a segmentary system of territorial groups which functions in a manner similar to that described for stateless segmentary societies in other areas of the world" (1975: 2). In other words, they exhibited a segmentary lineage structure, in which kinship connections were socially and politically paramount. Other features thought to correlate with 'tribalism' were present among the Yomut as well. For instance, they practiced mobile pastoralism and were often opposed to the interests of the central, urban, sedentary governments of Iran and Russia. For these reasons, the Yomut Turkmen are appropriate candidates for considering the connection between segmentary lineage structures and patterns of mobility.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> In fact, some of the evidence cited to support Tapper's and Cribb's convictions can hardly be called anthropological in the first place (e.g. Thesiger 1964).

<sup>90</sup> This discussion of the Yomut will involve three principle parts. The first is a consideration of the Yomut's geographical, ecological and economic situation, including their level and pattern of residential mobility. Second, their sociopolitical structuring principles will be reviewed in order to ascertain whether or not their society does, in fact, possess segmentary lineage structures. Finally, observations regarding the relationship between the level and type of mobility, and the sociopolitical structure of the Yomut will be offered for comparison with the following case study in this section.

The Yomut group studied directly by Irons inhabited the Gorgan Plain, east of the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea in northeastern Iran. This plain stretches north from the Alborz Mountain range into what is present-day Turkmenistan. The distance from the Alborz Mountains to the border with Turkmenistan is, at its widest, only about 100 km, but within this area are three distinct ecological zones, each of which were associated with a different economic and ethnographic environment at the time of the study. In the southern portion of this area, on the slopes and foothills of the Alborz, are dense forests.<sup>91</sup> To the north, this forested zone gave way quickly to an area of gradually sloping steppe that runs up to and just beyond the Gorgan River, which flows west out of the Alborz into the Caspian Sea. Across the Gorgan one encounters a zone of flat steppe-desert that stretches to the Atrek River, serving along part of its length as the modern border between Iran and now Turkmenistan, but once, Imperial and, at the time of Irons' study, Soviet, Russia.<sup>92</sup> At the time of Irons' study, this steppe-zone was characterized by extensive agricultural production undertaken by semi-sedentary Turkmen, who also kept small herds of sheep and goat. These Turkmen were referred to as *chomir*. They were, at the time, culturally and to some extent politically, indistinct from the seasonally nomadic Turkmen pastoralists, the *charwa*, who inhabited the steppe-desert region that lay between the Gorgan and Atrek rivers (1975: 21-22).

Before the middle of the twentieth century, the *chomir* were mobile like the *charwa*, although their livelihood still depended upon their agricultural pursuits. The

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<sup>91</sup> This area was inhabited by a sedentary Farsi and Turkic speaking Shia population, which took advantage of the temperate climate and adequate rainfall to practice intensive agriculture. These agriculturalists were referred to by the Yomut as *welayet* and were ethnically and politically distinct from them.

<sup>92</sup> This border, however, was only a construct of modern nation states and had little meaning to the Yomut until the early part of the twentieth century, at which time it came to be protected and policed by the Iranian and, at the time, Soviet Russian governments (1975: 27).

*chomir* made short migrations with their small flocks, camping near their agricultural fields, at the southern end of the Gorgan Plain, during the wetter, winter months. At this time they plowed and planted barley, wheat, and sometimes rice. In the spring, most of the *chomir* would migrate north to find pasture for their animals. In the late spring some would go back to harvest the fields, but the majority of households would not return to the agricultural zone until the late fall. There was, before the then-recent introduction of mechanized agriculture, no shortage of land that could be worked in the steppe zone and no private property rights. Instead, any uncultivated land put to the plow was considered the private property of its cultivator while it remained under cultivation (1975: 24-25).

The migration habits of the *charwa* followed a similar pattern. Amongst these groups, young men would make temporary summer herding camps on the banks of the Gorgan River, returning to semi-permanent camps to the north, in the zone of steppe-desert during the wet season, while their *chomir* cousins went south. During the wet, winter season, scattered pools of standing water and pastures could be found in the steppe-desert zone, which could support both the *charwa* households and their flocks until the late spring. In the wetter years, the *charwa* could even plant crops over the winter to be harvested in the late spring. It was convenient to have flocks close to residential camps during both the winter and spring both because lambing took place in the winter, and the newborn livestock needed to be sheltered, and also because the intensive milking season then followed in the spring. Both the *chomir* and the *charwa* practiced agriculture and animal husbandry, but neither group was self-sufficient and both produced surpluses to trade with sedentary farmers—*welayet*—and each other for necessary commodities. The *chomir* traded surpluses of wheat and barley and the *charwa*



traded livestock, wool, and carpets for rice, sugar, tea, salt, cloth, metal tools, rifles, and gun powder. Additionally, the *charwa* had to trade for wheat (1975: 25-26).

Both the *chomir* and the *charwa*, then, can be characterized as mobile. Neither group maintained a permanent settlement or home site, though the *charwa* were mobile over larger distances, for a greater part of the year, and were often not obligated to return to agricultural fields in order to harvest them. One interesting aspect of this mobility Irons noted was that it was not essential to their subsistence practices, yet they placed upon it special cultural significance (Irons 1975: 36). In fact, both *chomir* and *charwa* preferred the *charwa* way of life. The *chomir* practiced agriculture only because they lacked a sizable enough herd to provide subsistence for their families without a supplementary source of income:

...those among the *chomir* who became wealthy would buy livestock and take up a pastoral mode of life north of the Gorgan River. Those among the *charwa* who became poverty-stricken had several avenues open to them. One was to work as a hired shepherd for wages... Another alternative was to migrate south of the Gorgan and take up the agricultural life of the *chomir*. The economy of the *chomir* was clearly seen as a less preferable niche, to which the Turkmen resorted only when unable to maintain the pastoral life of the *charwa*.

Irons 1975: 26-27

Irons suggested two explanations for this preference for mobile pastoralism.<sup>93</sup> The most convincing is that the Yomut maintained this high capacity for mobility because of political conditions, specifically the threat of warfare and violence between individual segments of the Yomut tribe, and with other tribes or especially states. In such conditions, a capacity for mobility led to the preservation of their tribe from threats from forces both internal and external (1974: 647; 1975: 173). Furthermore, he argued for a

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<sup>93</sup> First, and possibly least important, the *charwa* were considered to be, and generally seemed to be, somewhat healthier than their *chomir* counterparts. For one thing this can be put down to the presence of malaria in the wetter regions of the Gorgan Plain and its absence in the steppe-desert zone (1975: 26).

connection between Yomut mobility and their political system, “which makes it especially easy for families or entire lineages to establish their residence in a new locality as a response to hostile political relations in their original location” (1975: 3). Following Irons, it will be argued below of all tribespeople, not just the Yomut in his study, that: “In a very real sense nomadism is a part of their political system and neither their politics nor their ecology can be understood without an appreciation of this fact” (1975: 39).

An appreciation for the structural importance of this mobility can be found in the recent history of the Yomut.<sup>94</sup> For the majority of the modern era, with a few exceptions up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Turkmen had been free of political control. Although sometimes nominally under the authority of sedentary rulers, only sometimes acknowledged, the Turkmen often viewed these relationships as alliances “rather than as an acceptance of authority, and their interpretation of their political status was by no means unrealistic” (1975: 8). Following the Second World War, though, mobility was on the decline as a result of more pervasive administrative and economic interpenetration of the Gorgan Plain by the Iranian state. This interpenetration was the result of technological innovations at the time, including not only military technology but also automobiles, tractors, and intensive irrigation agriculture. Concerted state interference in the lives of the Yomut began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century under the administration of Reza Shah. During the 1930s, the economy of the Yomut Turkmen was disturbed by the closing of the Russian border. This meant the closure of some migration routes, ultimately causing some pastoral Turkmen to settle in permanent settlements with only young men moving about between pastures with the herds. The lands occupied by the

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<sup>94</sup> Historical information documenting large-scale population displacements is especially rich in the case of the Yomut Turkmen due to the fact that they have been in close economic and sociopolitical contact with urban civilizations for at least a millennium (1975: 6).

Yomut still in Iran were declared crown property at this time as well, and a small annual tax for the rent of the land was extracted from them by the government. Also at this time, government bureaucrats began to micromanage the local economy, making decisions on where, when, and what kinds of crops were to be planted and where herds were to graze. This authoritarian system was shattered during the Second World War when the Allies invaded parts of Iran. Irons gives the impression that the permanent houses that the Yomut were required to build by the Persian government in the period of strict control prior to the invasion of 1941 were earnestly destroyed:

The pastoralists of Ajī Quī destroyed the houses they had been forced to build, using the roof beams for firewood. The ruins of several of these homes can still be seen in the dry season location of Ajī Quī. They had been large, thick-walled homes with two rooms, built in neat rows, decorated here and there with the camel brands of their descent groups.

The collapse of administration in 1941 allowed the pent-up hostility of several years of close and at times arbitrary and exploitative administration to break loose. Free to live again as they pleased, the pastoralists of Ajī Quī and neighboring communities destroyed all evidence of the period of forced settlement.

Irons 1975: 76<sup>95</sup>

At this time the Gorgan Plain was occupied by Soviet forces uninterested in administrating the affairs of the Yomut, who reportedly took the opportunity to immediately resume their mobile pastoral way of life (*ibid.*). After the Soviet withdrawal, the area once again fell under the administrative control of the Persian state. Although after the Second World War, up to the time of Irons' study in the mid-1970s, the state had not attempted the same level of direct control that had been imposed in the 1930s, the Gorgan Plain was nevertheless transformed, agricultural pursuits being intensified from the northern banks of the Gorgan River south to the forested zone, as a

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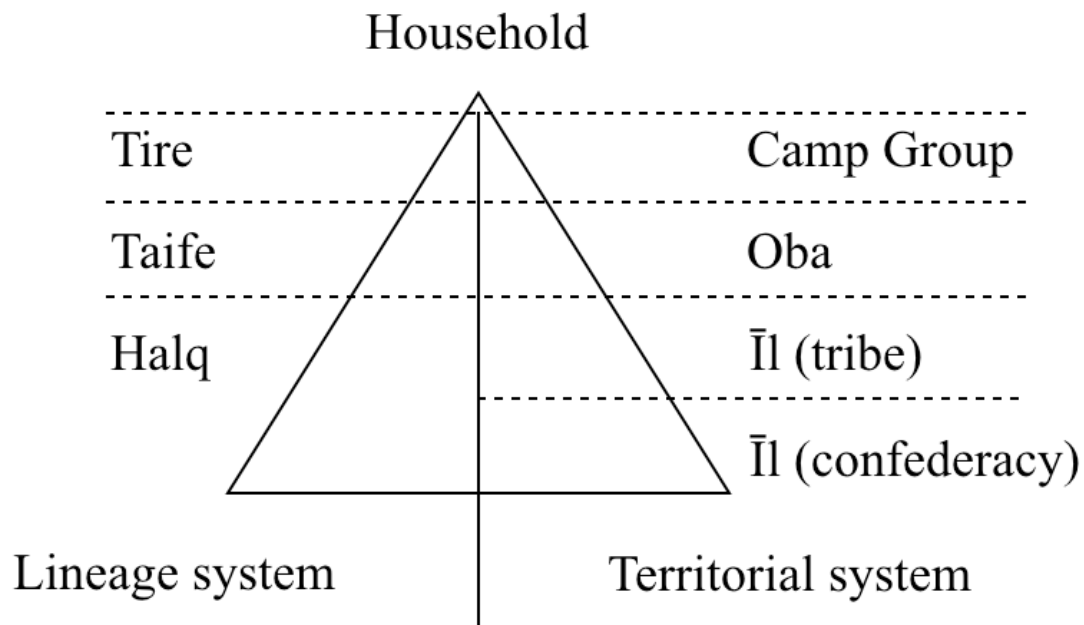
<sup>95</sup> The last sentence is clearly hyperbolic, given that Irons' observation of these ruined houses were the subject of the previous paragraph. Nonetheless, the vehemence with which the Yomut Turkmen abandoned their permanent abodes is communicated through this hyperbole.

result of mechanized agriculture. “Thus, in the 15 years prior to the field research on which [Irons’] study is based, agriculture expanded and livestock production decreased drastically throughout that part of the Yomut territory in which agriculture is possible” (1975: 27-30). In the northern part of the plain, where there was not enough water available to irrigate extensively, and where Irons focused his study, the economy of the Yomut was still based on pastoral production.<sup>96</sup>

The Yomut Turkmen of the village represented by the fictional name Ajī Qūī in Irons’ study, like all those of the dry-steppe region of the Gorgon Plain, when asked, described a sociopolitical system of segmentary, hierarchically nested paternal lineage groups, defining a system of collective ownership and balanced opposition, which mandated that groups that are agnatically more closely related had a duty to defend the interests of one another from more distantly related or altogether unrelated groups. This description is fully commensurate with that offered in the previous chapter as a segmentary lineage system. This lineage system, however, did not describe the whole social or political totality of the Yomut Turkmen. Their nested hierarchy of descent groups was paralleled by a structurally similar nested hierarchy of residence groups. These structures are to be approximately equated and have their ultimate point of intersection in the household, the most fundamental political and economic unit of the Yomut, or indeed any, segmentary lineage society. This relationship can be diagrammed as in figure 3.1. The significance of the Yomut Turkmen for understanding the

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<sup>96</sup> “It is also largely representative of earlier social conditions among all of the Gurgan Yomut, including those north of the Atrak River in what is now Soviet territory” (1975: 31). It would be convenient if these economically more traditional groups could be compared with the more agricultural and sedentary Yomut further south, in order to investigate the effects of increased sedentism upon their sociopolitical systems, nevertheless Irons does at least note that his initial impression of them was as societies that had clearly and totally departed from the more traditional system he was studying in the arid region surrounding Ajī Qūī (1975: 13).



**Figure 3.1. The Yomut Sociopolitical System**

relationship between segmentary lineage structures and mobility lies in the synthesis, and in some ways the antithesis, of these two systems.

Each of these categories has different, though at times overlapping, functions. It is important to note that these two types of groups do not have the same composition. Each residence group has a numerically dominant descent group which can, and usually does, control any group action by the residence unit. Nevertheless, most residence groups contain a large number of households that do not belong to the dominant descent group, and yet are counted as full members of the residence unit...

Irons 1975: 39

The ultimate significance of the Yomut residence groups is that they collectively owned rights to specific territories of both the steppe and steppe-desert areas for the purposes of pasturing their flocks and planting crops. Membership then conferred these rights of use to a household, technically independent of their place in the lineage system. Unlike descent groups, in which membership is defined by patriliney, these residence groups were formed from mutual consent. At the lowest level of the resident-group hierarchy were

camp groups composed of anywhere from 2 to 10 households. Usually the household heads of these groups were close agnates, but sometimes small groups of agnates also came together with other such groups with which they were not closely related to form a residential unit that migrated together. These groups shared in many domestic and economic labors. Camp groups were politically much less important than the larger residence units of higher levels of integration (1975: 46). The next level in the residence group hierarchy is that of the *oba*. The *oba* was the most basic level at which territorial rights were collectively held. These rights were not vested in camp groups, but in each household individually. The territory, thus, was not subdivided among camp groups but shared by all members of the *oba*, collectively. Like the camp group, membership in an *oba* was also contractually agreed upon. The households heads composing an *oba* were usually composed of at least a core of agnatically related men, though it was not limited to such by definition (1975: 47). The structural level above the *oba* in the residence group hierarchy was called the *il*. This word has a multiplicity of meanings to the Yomut. It can be used to refer to a territorially contiguous unit of residence groups, united in segmentary principle in opposition to other such groups, in which case it might be translated as 'tribe' in the sense of a political unit. In that way, it denotes the structural level above the *oba*. It can also be used to refer to any number of *oba* that are at peace and united in mutual defense. These larger units are not territorially contiguous and when used to refer to such units the term may be translated as 'confederacy'. It can also be used as an adjective simply to describe a state of peace between two separate *oba* (1975: 49).

“Despite the fact that residence units and descent units are characterized by different modes of recruitment, there is a tendency for the two to correspond approximately in composition” (Irons 1975: 50). This was because of the importance of patrikin, as opposed to affinal kin in the tribal structure of the Yomut. It was the lineage system that defined the pattern of political alliance and provided the moral obligation to support close agnates against enemies that were agnatically more distant, or unrelated. Although social and economic connections *outside* the paternal line could be of great importance to any given household, these connections were purely social, which is to say that though they were economic, they were not political. They do not prescribe nor imply any political alliance in the face of a dispute with another group. Affinal relationships could often be characterized by important social and economic connections, too, but these neither required nor sanctioned physical support between households, to the point that even if the social relationship between agnatic groups became poisoned, the obligation to provide support still persisted (1975: 114). Because of this,

there is a strong preference for residence with patrikin. The result is that... the membership of each *oba* is predominantly of one descent group. The same generalizations can be made about the composition of tribes and confederacies. In the case of camps... they often are purely agnatic in composition.

Irons 1975: 51

The territorial system was not independent of the lineage system, then, but neither was it fully commensurate with it. Political interests and alliances were formed, on the first hand, with co-resident households in one *oba* against structurally opposed *oba*, then finally opposed *īl*. This principle was only contradicted by the more fundamental political, moral imperative, that is, to support agnatic groups and never to align against them. Because there was a great amount of correspondence between territorial units and

patrilineages, even the names of territorial and lineage units tended to coincide as particular *il* and *oba* were largely dominated by a single lineage group (1975: 49). Despite the political preeminence of agnatic kin connections, however, neither one of these systems alone encapsulated the political system or the social system. Both structures were implicated in the political lives of the Yomut Turkmen. This implies a contradiction, one which is illuminating for the purposes of this study.

The potential for contradiction is most clearly manifested in the situation of those lineages which were referred to as *gongshī*. These were the lineages that resided away from their agnatic core group, in an *oba* or *il* dominated by households with whom they had no agnatic relationship. Such lineage groups were found at every level of the territorial hierarchy, from a household in a camp group, to camp groups in an *oba* dominated by another lineage, to an *oba* within an *il*, so dominated. Their situation, of course, put the *gongshī* lineages at a political disadvantage. In a case where a *gongshī* group became embroiled in a dispute with another group constituted by households from the dominant patrilineage of their territorial unit, they would be immediately be opposed to many of the other households with which they are co-resident. Another way this disadvantage manifested itself is in a situation where the *gongshī* lineage was in dispute with a third party, not a residence group, and not a member of the dominant patrilineage of their residence group. At these times, "...other members of their residence group will support them... However, the degree of support they can expect is less than that which close agnates would provide" (1975: 51). When these *gongshī* found themselves in the awkward position of inhabiting a residential unit dominated by a lineage group that was presently in conflict with some element of their own patrilineal unit, Irons reported that



they would either “not join in the prosecution of the dispute, or if the confrontation became hostile enough they might be forced to resolve their awkward situation by withdrawing” from their current territorial unit (1975: 63).

The *gongshī* phenomenon demonstrates the presence of structural friction in the Yomut system at the time of Irons’ study. Nevertheless, it seems also to demonstrate that this friction was felt primarily by the *gongshī* lineages themselves. By physically moving away from the source of potential conflict, the *gongshī* would potentially forsake economic and social alliances for paramount political concerns. In these cases, structural friction was experienced by the lineage, which had to decide whether it would honor the moral imperatives of the segmentary lineage system, or pursue its own material interests. By taking an inactive role in a dispute between a territorial unit dominated by their own lineage, a *gongshī* lineage also demonstrates a lack of fit between the system and their situation. In such a situation, social and economic concerns are surely influencing political actions, and self-interest is outweighing the value of group solidarity. As long as they found themselves in the minority, however, there would be no institutional contradiction of the kind that Giddens spoke of as producing the heat and friction that would lead to structural change for the whole society. A final interesting feature of *gongshī* lineages is that after a great amount of time passes, on the order of several generations, a *gongshī* lineage would be, for all political intents and purposes, incorporated into the dominant lineage of a territorial group *as if* it were agnatically related, disposing of its previous identity (1975: 57-58).<sup>97</sup> This, again, demonstrates that

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<sup>97</sup> Unfortunately, Irons provided no information on how this process takes place, other than to say that it is a “gradual” process (1975: 57). Whether or not a structural crisis precedes such an event is not immaterial, but nevertheless it would be expected that such a crisis involves the *gongshī* alone and does not lead to system-wide structural friction, which might result in changes on an institutional level.

the political-moral system can stand in contradiction to self-interest and it demonstrates how, among the Yomut, the structural friction caused by these conflicts of interest are diffused—not through modification of the moral system, properly the structuring principles of the segmentary lineage system, but rather by modification of the system, or interrelations of parts within the society. This is the most important lesson of the *gongshī*—territoriality introduces the potential for discordance between a segmentary lineage system and the actual political actions which members of that system will undertake, because self-interest is more likely to be based on geographical considerations regarding the distribution of resources and economic alliances, and so less likely to accord with the lines of political alliance presupposed by a segmentary lineage system, i.e. in terms of increasing agnatic distance. In sum, the *gongshī* lineage is a locus for Giddensian ‘heat,’ or friction, in a segmentary lineage system when it occupies an *ambiguous* position in the political system as a result of its cohabitation with non-agnatic lineage groups that has led it to ally itself on the basis of geographic propinquity rather than agnation. The adoption of such lineages into the paternal system of their neighbors, or the physical removal of those lineages, however, dispels this structural ‘friction,’ thereby dispelling the pressure which might eventually lead to structural, institutional change and the transformation of the segmentary lineage system into something else. Although speculative, one could imagine how, among sedentary *gongshī* in the southern part of Yomut territory, mobility would have become impossible as a strategy to overcome these contradictions, putting more strain upon the segmentary lineage system that would ultimately lead to its collapse.

There is, then, more than simply a co-occurrence between segmentary lineage structures and mobility as suggested in the case of the Yomut Turkmen. Instead, there is reason to believe that in their case ‘mobility is necessary’. The ability of the Yomut groups to maintain the fundamental soundness of their lineage system despite the phenomenon of *gongshī* lineages is to be put down to their cultural insistence on mobility, to a degree not mandated by their economic or ecological system, as well as a mechanism by which *gongshī* lineages were eventually subsumed into the majority lineage in their *oba*. Irons hypothesized a connection between the broader political system and the importance placed upon mobility by the Yomut, which he put down to mainly political, but also economic factors (1974; 1975: 72, 171). Specifically, he stressed the role mobility played in diffusing tension between segmentary groups, but especially in resisting the state, both through physically avoiding its incursions, but also by the conveyance of special military ability in actively fighting state authority (1974; 1975: 171-72). I argue that a more important factor for the preservation of the lineage system among the Yomut at the time of his study was the avoidance of structural strain in the face of increasing administrative encapsulation and interpenetration by the Iranian state. Mobility and the economic and social friction it could potentially produce were maintained to avoid the *structural* friction that would result from sedentarization, and that must have been felt, to some extent, during the period of forced sedentarization in the 1930s in villages such as Ajī Quī. The destruction of their houses, acknowledged as being more comfortable than tents, and also, according to Irons, economically and ecologically more suitable to their way of life, represented less of a rejection of Iranian authoritarianism than the rejection of a sedentary way of life, conflicting in its reality

with their segmentary lineage system. In this way also, the Yomut preservation of the segmentary lineage principle in their political life could be understood as a certain amount of cultural inertia, not in terms of a lethargy of cultural change, but instead in the preservation of mobility so unnecessary to their economy, but absolutely vital to their moral-political system.

The same interrelationship of segmentation lineage structures and mobility is illustrated differently but no less significantly for this study by the Musawad Safi Pashtuns of the Afghaniya region of Afghanistan.

#### *The Musawad Safi Pashtuns of Afghaniya*

The Safi Pashtuns are mentioned specifically by Richard Tapper as an example of a sedentary tribal group (1983: 17), in support of his opinion that “in Afghanistan most tribespeople were settled cultivators who had little or no leaning to pastoralism or nomadism...” (1983: 8) and, as such, they merit special consideration here. This group was the subject of an ethnographic study undertaken by Jeffrey H. P. Evans-von Krbek from August 1970 to September 1971 (1977). The Safi are members of the Pashtun ethnic group, a group, at the time of Evans-von Krbek’s study, composed of more than 13 million members, more than half of which inhabited Afghanistan, politically and demographically dominating the country. The Pashtuns compose an ethnic group whose members understand themselves to share that identity by virtue of common descent from a single man, often called Qais. Ethnic Pashtuns are economically and politically diverse, being made up of agriculturalists, pastoralists, sedentary agriculturalists, nomads, administrators, traders, craftsmen and migrant workers. These groups can be variously

egalitarian “or quasi feudal” (1977: 10-13). The Safi, in particular, are one of fifteen primary lineages of the paramount Pashtun patrilineal group composing, at the time of study, approximately some eighty thousand individuals stretching “from the Pech Valley in the east along the Kunar and Kabul rivers to the Nijrao and Panjshir valleys in the northwest” (1977: 2), in Kaspia province, just east of Kabul, thus forming “a sort of semi-circle around Nuristan” (1977: 17). The particular group that Evans-von Krbek focused on were located in the lower Pech Valley. This group referred to itself as the Musawad Safi and was composed of about three thousand members, all of which primarily inhabited the Pech River Valley. This valley is 19 kilometers long, running southwest to the Panjshir Valley down from the mountains of Kohistan and Nuristan in the north and east. The area inhabited by the Musawad Safi, the lower part of the Pech Valley, was referred to locally as Afghaniya. It consisted of about 14 square kilometers and was composed of evenly scattered agricultural settlements (1977: 53-55).

The Pech Valley is watered primarily by the Pech River and its main tributary, the Ghain. At the point where the rivers join, the Pech is divided into two channels as it flows through the valley, thus subdividing the valley floor into three main sections with banks on either side and ‘islands’ between the channels. Both rivers are fed primarily by snowmelt in the spring and early summer months. This snow falls through the winter from November to April. Total annual precipitation is only about 350 millimeters, necessitating the use of irrigation for what is relatively reliable, intensive agricultural production (1977: 53). During the late spring and early summer, the Safi channeled river water into irrigation canals, which serviced all of the agricultural fields (1977: 72). This irrigation network allowed for two harvests per year of various crops including maize and

rice, but principally consisting of wheat and clover (1977: 79). Interspersed among these irrigated fields were small villages whose inhabitants generally owned and worked the surrounding agricultural land (1977: 71). Agricultural production was the most significant economic practice in the valley and supported the majority of Musawad Safi in Afghaniya. Evans-von Krbek pointed out, however, that about one quarter of households in the valley did not own enough land to support themselves, and so could be found to be engaged in a wide variety of other supplementary economic and subsistence pursuits including hunting, shop keeping, and, for young men, seasonal migrant labor (1977: 68-9). Sharecropping was also a common practice among the Musawad Safi (1977: 82). Approximately fifteen percent of families were completely landless and had to support themselves entirely through these alternate pursuits.

The division of labor and pattern of landownership within Musawad Safi society at the time of Evans-von Krbek's study was dependent upon both the settlement history of the Pech Valley and the descent system by which its inhabitants were sorted into three primary social classes. Although there has been uncertainty among scholars as to where their origins lay, it is likely that the Safi's own tradition of the settlement of the Pech Valley is an accurate account of their history:

The Safi's own myth or tradition of settlement states that in the distant past the forefathers of the present settlers together with their families moved up from Tagao into the Pachogan valley. There they were met by the determined opposition of the kafir inhabitants. After a fierce struggle the Safi succeeded in driving them out and occupying their lands.

Evans-von Krbek 1977: 35-36

Evans-von Krbek estimated the date of their arrival in the valley to be about 1700 AD (1977: 39). This was most likely, as the tradition states, a violent process whereby a subset of the Safi, originally nomadic, replaced another settled group already inhabiting

the valley, and then divided the agricultural land up amongst themselves—an historically attested practice known to have been practiced by Pashtuns upon the conquest of new territory.<sup>98</sup> The Musawad Safi, then, also referred to as *taxti*, or ‘original settlers’ who accounted for approximately less than half of the valley’s population at the time of the study (1977: 119), arrived there by force of conquest before the other two social groups—the *rāghli* ‘newcomers’ and the *ājnabiyān* ‘strangers’ (1977: 46). The *rāghli* arrived after the initial phase of sedentarization, at the point when the *taxti* began to pursue more intensive agricultural production. They settled on the less fertile fields on the edges of the valley and, over time, were able to buy better land from the *taxti* and intersperse their own hamlets among those of the *taxti*. At the time of his study, Evans von-Krbek noted that there were eighteen *rāghli* hamlets both interspersed among the sixteen *taxti* hamlets, and also located on the edges of the valley (1977: 48-9). The final social group, referred to as *ājnabiyān*, or ‘strangers’ were part of an ongoing demographic process at the time of the study. This group was composed of mostly nomadic non-Safi Pashtuns who had purchased cheap land in the valley for use as pasture. It also included some outsiders who had purchased land in the valley, whether on the margins or in the midst of the irrigated landscape, or who had acquired land

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Initially a survey, as is usual among Pakhtuns, would have been made so that the quality of the land and the availability of water for irrigation could be assessed. The division itself would have been carried out by a neutral, i.e. non-tribal person, generally a Pir (holy man) or Sheikh (descendant of the Prophet) who would have tried to ensure that each extended family head received not only an equal share in terms of area but also in terms of the quality of the land...

As the *taxti* [original] population increased further more distant fields would have been cultivated, the fallow periods would have been reduced and the majority of the pasture turned into arable land or sold. The last factor would probably have followed relatively soon after the settlement because both the desire and the need for sheep and goats - a relic of the nomadic or semi-nomadic invaders past - would have been reduced by sedentarisation and only those animals which were essential for an agricultural economy, e.g. oxen and milk cows, would have been retained.

Evans-von Krbek 1977: 48

through marriage into the community, a relatively new legal development in Afghaniya at the time (1977: 49-51). The pastoral *ājnabiyān* on the margins of the valley were the only mobile elements of society in Afghaniya.

At the time of Evans-von Krbek's study, the Musawad Safi lineage system was nearly inextricably bound up with the territorial system, and it is, as a result, difficult to discuss the one without reference to the other. This relationship was quite different than that which has been described for the Yomut Turkmen. It is clear that the Safi Pashtuns inhabiting Afghaniya possessed what many ethnographers (and specifically Tapper, as mentioned above) would refer to as 'tribal' sociopolitical system. All the members of at least the *taxti* and *rāghli* social classes were ordered into patrilineal descent groups, although only the members of the descendants of the original founding population, the Musawad Safi, were united by their common heritage into a single patrilineal system "and [were] divided up into a number of major lineages (khels) and minor lineages" (1977: 119). The *rāghli* had integrated themselves into this social structure in the sense of "conforming to the, for them, thoroughly familiar patrilineal ideology and lineage organization and by residing on the territory of the musawad Safi major lineages" (ibid). In Afghaniya, there were nineteen minor lineages belonging to the Musawad Safi, and "at least fifteen others" that did not trace descent from the original founding population (1977: 124-25). Below the level of the minor lineages were groups called *koranai*. These groups were composed of male agnates united by their common descent from an apical ancestor who was between two and five generations removed from them (1977: 127). These tribal groupings defined the Safis understanding of proper political behavior in a way that should now be familiar to the reader: close agnates should ally with one



another against more distant agnates or unrelated groups. Descent groups, then, such as *koranai*, should oppose one another when they threaten one another's interests and welfare. This constituted an ideal, or folk model of political morality among the Safi Pashtuns of Afghaniya (1977: 141-42)<sup>99</sup>:

A person who has honour and courage and wishes to be a good muslim and a Pakhtun must whole-heartedly support the principle and fact of agnation. If he does so then he receives all the accolades and approbation of the society, if he does not then criticism and censure are his part. Whilst this may have been the case in the past it now represents an ideal which few follow.

Evans-von Krbek 1977: 240

Although the ideal was not always practiced in *Afghaniya* at the time of Evans-von Krbek's study, aspects of the ideology persisted in the daily discourse of the Safi. So, for instance, when the founders of unrelated *koranai* were spoken of as being brothers, the speakers

[were] not expressing a biological reality but a structural equality... [they] are implying that the behaviour and interaction of these groups is determined by the strictures associated with groups founded by brothers and based on descent. Now the *koranai* are no longer the only groups in opposition because other mechanisms, as I will show below, are equally involved in this function. Nevertheless most people of the community still continue to see and explain conflict in terms of the opposition of descent groups.

Evans-von Krbek 1977: 129-130

Such a use, then, was idiomatic and founded upon structures of common reference, but which, to an extent, no longer applied. Explaining this disparity is important for understanding the relationships between segmentary lineage systems and mobility. First, however, it is necessary to examine the territorial system and the interaction of lineage and geographical propinquity among the Safi in order to fully appreciate the

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<sup>99</sup> Evans-von Krbek actually explained the contradiction between the Safis own explanation of their political structuring principles and the actions that he observed by reference to Ward 1965. This explanation is rejected here on the grounds that the disjuncture in the Safi case is qualitative, while Ward described differences between larger and more dispersed groups geographically sharing an ethnic identity in a quantitative way, unrelated to structural principles of social constitution.

contradictions between their actual sociopolitical actions and their folk model of ideal moral behavior.

Like the Yomut, above, the segmentary lineage system of the Safi Pashtuns of Afghaniya corresponded also to territorial groupings. The similarity stops there, though, for while lineage groups in each society were associated with a territorial unit, the Yomut emphasis was on household mobility while amongst the Musawad Safi, it was much more so upon the fixity of residence. Land and water rights were originally divided among the ancestors of the Musawad Safi (1977: 133). These rights were vested in households and controlled by the paternal heads of those households, whether a nuclear or extended family composed of any number of married sons. Upon the death of the father, the sons inherited those same rights of access, equally. A natural result of this practice was that

the fields of brothers are closer to each other than they are to the fields of other agnates. Similarly the fields of members of one koranai will be closer than those of two koranai... Thus lineage groups of different sizes are associated with differently sized territories and the lineage structure of society also involves a lineage structure of space.

Evans-von Krbek 1977: 133

As such, hamlets were generally composed primarily of all the local descent groups of a minor lineage and a hamlet, therefore, was seen to large extent *as* a minor lineage. Furthermore, the minor lineages of a descent group also tended to cluster together, therefore defining a contiguous territory belonging to a major lineage—"a territory which is the summation of the minor lineages' / hamlets' territories" (1977: 58). This sedentary and territorial condition then complicated the political system in a number of ways. First, on an inter-hamlet level, as *rāghli* and *ājnabiyān* moved into these agricultural areas and interspersed themselves among land held by the *taxti*, members of *taxti* lineages might find themselves sharing the same interests of their hamlet members, non-lineage mates,

and find cause to ally with them against neighboring villages primarily composed of agnates, in contradiction of the principle of agnatically balanced opposition (1977: 134-40). “The obligations of propinquity have in these cases become stronger than those of more distant agnation or descent” (1977: 165). Second, on an intra-hamlet level, the contradiction of lineage principles was apparent in the institution of the *para*.

The meaning of *para* is simply ‘faction’ in the Pashtun language. In Afghaniya these were groups which had “a purely political function” and had a “structural and functional equivalence” with *koranai* (1977: 244). In other words, the *para* would perform actions that were previously the domain of the *koranai* on behalf of a group defined by voluntary participation. It would defend group honor and provide support in cases of conflict between its members and outsiders. Although membership in the *para* was situationally defined, and their boundaries were more flexible than the *koranai*, they tended to be relatively permanent and usually had at their core a group of households that were agnatically closely related (1977: 247). Nevertheless, the fracture lines between such groups could and did contradict the political values of the agnatic ideology. Evans-von Krbek reported that boundaries between *para* can fracture the ideal political solidarity of a *koranai*, even to the point of leading brothers to be in opposition to one another (1977: 248, 252). For example, this is the case in an interaction witnessed between two brothers of opposing *para*, mullahs A and T:

Mullah T (a Safi mullah) had been able to obtain extra spring water from the hamlet of wali xān xel... His brother, mullah A, could also have purchased water from the hamlet of wali xān xel. In order to irrigate his fields, however, he would have had to have led the water along mullah T’s ditches because mulla T’s fields lay between his, i.e. mullah A’s, fields and wali xān xel’s water. As mullah T would not allow this, mullah A’s fields became burnt and bare whereas those of mullah T were luxuriant with rice shoots. The difference and the opposition were clear to all.

In other words, a man whose fields lay between a source of water and his brothers fields, refused to allow his brother an easement to pass water through his section of an irrigation canal, an act which would have very little if any cost to his own interests, but which were dire for those of his brother.

Evans-von Krbek listed many reasons why *para* came into existence, but for simplicity these can easily be reduced to one: economic self-interest (1977: 245-46).<sup>100</sup> At the heart of this self-interest lay the importance of land as a source of perpetual economic security for a household in Afghaniya. One of the ways this importance was manifested was through the effective loss of an individual's status in the genealogical structure as a result of the loss of land, resulting in a loss of formal political power and leading to a kind of second-class citizenship (1977: 138). The desire to maintain economic self-sufficiency, largely through the acquisition of productive agricultural land, was the primary factor leading to political relationships that subverted the segmentary lineage system. Although agnation remained an important foundation for political cohesion to these ends, so did affinity and simple propinquity—common interests resulting from proximity of resources (1977: 311).

The relationship between mobility and tribalism amongst the Safi Pashtuns of Afghaniya, then, is illustrative of the argument offered here, that a segmentary lineage system operating under a principle of balanced opposition, has a dependent relationship

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<sup>100</sup> The five factors influencing the formation of a *para* are, as he gives them: "Firstly... the concrete gains members hope will accrue from their support," either through money or future reciprocal support. Second, "Assistance will be given if it is considered by potential supporters that participation will serve their own interests best," i.e. by securing a powerful ally. Third, "support in general creates an obligation in those who are supported. Fourth, "participation in a *para* can be used as a means of opposing, weakening or diminishing the political importance of a particularly powerful man or group". Fifth, the reverse may also be the case (1977: 245). Sixth, "Finally and probably the strongest cause for participation are marriage links between members," which make impermanent *para* groups more stable (1977: 246).

upon mobility. This is especially clear when the Musawad Safi are compared to the Yomut Turkmen of the previous example. Whereas the Yomut were able to maintain their unnecessary habit of residential mobility because it did not conflict with their focus on pastoral production and their low population density, the Musawad Safi settled into an economic practice of intensive agricultural production. While the Yomut studied by Irons were able to maintain their segmentary lineage system with a minimum of structural friction—at least for the time that Irons studied them—in the most agriculturally unproductive area of the Gorgan Plain, this was not a possibility for the Safi, whose originally similar segmentary lineage system did not adequately marry the self-interests of individual households engaged in intensive agricultural practice with the structuring principles that informed the system. That this contradiction between folk model and actual political action was the result of *institutional* contradictions of the kind described by Giddens as producing the friction and heat of historical change is clear in the disconnect between the folk model of the Musawad Safi and the habitual political actions that Evans-von Krbek observed being undertaken during the period of his study. This is evident by the fact that the contradiction of the patrilineal principle in political action was a source of dismay among the Safi “at least by those not directly profiting” (1977: 248). At the same time, though, like the Bedouin of Cyrenaica described by Peters, the Safi were perfectly capable of explaining the contradiction of the patrilineal principle when analyzing specific political actions (1977: 142), and certainly took into account the political reality of *para* group formation when undertaking their own political calculations (1977: 248). In terms of structuration theory, the discursive level of political consciousness played host to a number of contingencies, because the segmentary lineage

model was, in the then-present conditions of Irons' study, attenuated by political reality—it was not an accurate reflection of political action because a previous congruence between individual self-interest and the segmentary lineage model of balanced opposition was breaking down on account of territorial stability and the private ownership of natural resources. That the Safi system was in the midst of such a 'hot' structural change, Evans-von Krbek noted frequently, stating that their sociopolitical system was transitioning from a patrilineal system to "a village/family organised system whose members were united through agnation but also and equally through affinity, propinquity and common residence..." (1977: 311). Thus, while men of the older generation still maintained their genealogies, most cited extenuating circumstances of economic difficulty or government interference in the breakdown of the patrilineal principle (1977: 238-40).

Despite his recognition of this ongoing structural change in Safi society, Evans-von Krbek did not associate this change directly with a lack of mobility. Because that is the point being argued for here, it is necessary to briefly address Evans-von Krbek's own explanations for this change and to show how they are ultimately unsatisfying. The sources of "disenchantment with agnatic ties and relations," identified by Evans-von Krbek included government interference, "over-population, land shortage and, in the short term, drought" (1977: 312). Government interference was manifested in three related forms. The first of these, and that which Evans-von Krbek cited as the reason for the lack of corporate action among major and minor lineages, was the impossibility of tribal warfare in "the presence of a modern, well-equipped and well-organised national army" which prohibited such behavior (1977: 139). A second form was "the government's conscious efforts to reduce the powers of descent groups by dealing in

administrative and legal matters with individuals rather than groups...” (ibid). Thirdly, the political cohesion of smaller lineage groups and *koranai* were undermined as a result of the elimination of the task of blood-revenge to maintain honor, “the result of the local government’s activities in Nijrao” (1977: 312). None of these explanations are entirely satisfying because of the existence of the *para* groups, which were said to be taking the place of *koranai* in the political sphere of Safi life. Evans-von Krbek does not make it at all clear why agnatically-defined political segments would suffer under such conditions, while those formed by propinquity would persist. He also argued that overpopulation in Afghaniya, an ongoing problem at the time of his study, resulted in the “division of many holdings into unworkably small units” (ibid). Compounded, he argued, by a recent spate of drought years, close agnates found themselves at odds over these limited resources leading “latent tensions between brothers” to blossom into overt hostility (1977: 313). The reasons for such hostility are clear and, though apparently not appreciated as such by Evans-von Krbek, structurally integral to a territorial system based upon the subdivision of land in each generation: in a situation of population growth, each subsequent generation will have less and less land to work, and will therefore be in direct competition with their closest agnates for their share of their father’s estate. As Evans-von Krbek noted, “members [of the same hamlet] are more interested in acquiring the adjoining fields of agnates than the fields of members of other hamlets because the former are easier to work and irrigate and are a natural extension of their own fields” (1977: 241). The extreme shortage of land in Afghaniya at the time of Evans-von Krbek’s study, as well as the drought which compounded the poor fortunes for those landholders, who were the sons of especially fecund forefathers, and even government

interference, were simply compounding factors to the breakdown of the tribal political model of the Musawad Safi Pashtuns. The ultimate cause was structural. It was a disconnection between the economic self-interest of those individuals and their segmentary lineage structures. This structural conflict was inevitable, having been predestined at the time of the settlement of the Musawad Safi in the Pech River Valley, whenever it was that their settlement took place.

This examination of the Musawad Safi supports the hypothesis that segmentary lineage systems are especially adapted to situations of mobility. Unlike the Yomut, who were able to maintain their system with a minimum of discursive contradiction caused by territorial political considerations, the Musawad Safi eventually reached a point of structural contradiction that generated an enormous amount of structural friction and heat and began changing their society fundamentally, from one that was initially a segmentary lineage system, but was ultimately unable to harmonize this system with a sedentary agricultural subsistence pattern. If mobility had remained a mechanism to dispel this friction, the segmentary lineage system might have remained relatively intact, as among the Yomut, however the Safi concentration on intensive agriculture seems to have precluded this possible outcome.<sup>101</sup>

### *Conclusion*

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<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, one curious similarity with the Yomut is noticeable: the so-called checkerboard pattern (cf. Barth 1959). This same pattern was visible amongst the Yomut at the level of the territorial *il*, the highest level of communal ownership of property, and therefore ownership of resources. Beyond this level, tribal units were united by extra-territorial confederacies (Irons 1975: 65). It is at this level, too, that political action is most independent of the segmentary patrilineal system of balanced opposition, or tribalism (e.g. the situation of the *Sherep* and *Qojuq* tribes, 1975: 59-60). Amongst the Musawad Safi, the same pattern was visible on the most fundamental level, that of the household. This is because the household was the most fundamental land-owning unit in that society. This shared pattern, though taking two different forms on either extreme of a continuum, demonstrates the fundamental incongruence between sedentism, as it results in the ownership of natural resources and, therefore, common interests made on the basis of propinquity, and segmentary lineage systems.



It should be clear from the above examples that there is a necessary correlation between segmentary lineage systems and mobility, such that a loss of mobility entails the contradiction of those structures.<sup>102</sup> This observation directly contradicts Tapper's conviction that "tribalism is more necessary to nomadism than nomadism to tribalism" (1990: 54). In fact, if one defines tribalism as "the political dimension of pastoral nomadism" (ibid), one must conclude that this correlates with segmentary lineage systems, such that his original sentiment should be reversed. In the example of the Safi, the whole foundation for their segmentary lineage system was fundamentally threatened by a structural contradiction between the assumption of that model that close agnates would share interests against more distant relatives or outsiders, and their actual self-interests, which were dictated by territorial relationships as a result of agricultural production. Amongst the Yomut Turkmen, on the other hand, a segmentary lineage system prevailed, as a result of the maintenance of what might be called non-essential mobility.<sup>103</sup>

Mobility correlates with segmentary lineage systems for three primary reasons. First, segmentary lineage systems are best suited for a situation of territorial (i.e., resource) instability. This is because territoriality breeds relationships of shared interests that contradict the tenets of segmentary lineage solidarity. This point has been made by others, most notably Salzman (1980: 106), who nevertheless discounted its importance in terms of directional, structural change (e.g. 1980: 95). Furthermore, the compatibility of the capacity for mobility with a cultural value of independence, on both an individual and

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<sup>102</sup> It is important to note that the inverse is not necessarily true. A mobile society may not necessarily be tribal. In this way, it is not presupposed that a mobile hunter-gatherer society must have any specific structural principles relating to descent ideology or segmentation.

<sup>103</sup> This is true from an economic standpoint, however one could easily argue that is ideologically essential, though for different reasons than those postulated by Irons (i.e. 1975: 172-73).

segmentary level, provides the second and third reasons: the desire and ability to avoid political domination by central authorities, whether these derive from outside polities, including states or other tribes, and the desire and ability to avoid domination by any potential sources of political authority arising from within a segmentary lineage system. It is to these topics, the relation of segmentary lineage systems with political authority and its economic bases, to which I will now turn, beginning first with a discussion of the economies of segmentary lineage systems.

### **Segmentary Lineage Systems and Pastoralism, Subsistence, and Autarky**

The previous section of this dissertation established that segmentary lineage societies are necessarily mobile. This is both empirically demonstrable and follows a structural logic relating to the definition of segmentary lineage systems that was developed in the previous chapter. Non-mobile societies develop political ties on the basis of geographical propinquity that contradict the structuring principles of a segmentary lineage system. This section will establish that segmentary lineage systems correlate with economic systems focused on subsistence through the exploitation of a variety of resources, including, but not limited to, the primary and secondary products of pastoralism. It will also be explained how these economic features provide an integral part of the cultural context in which segmentary lineage systems are structured, and how they underlay their long-term institutional stability by safeguarding autonomy and preventing the accumulation of wealth that might lead to the development of long-term political inequality.

Pastoralism<sup>104</sup> may be defined as “the practice of keeping sheep, cattle, or other grazing animals; the nomadic, non-industrial society that this implies” (Oxford English Dictionary Online).<sup>105</sup> Private ownership of livestock, independent production, and the common ownership of pasture and water resources characterize traditional pastoral production systems (Khazanov 1984: 123). It is argued here that segmentary lineage systems, and mobile pastoralism, as an economic strategy, are inherently complementary to one another. This is because, in a traditional mobile pastoral economy, patterns of mutual economic and political interests are completely congruent with the sociopolitical structures that define the moral and ideal behaviors that comprise segmentary lineage systems. This congruency stems from specific attributes and concerns relating to pastoral production in non- and pre-industrial societies that specialize in its pursuit.

First, pastoralism confers the ability of residential mobility. This is an obvious point, but it bears mentioning here as it is one of the most politically significant ways in which pastoralists potentially differ from agricultural producers—even those who practice pastoralism supplementary to agriculture.<sup>106</sup> This need for movement can be the

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<sup>104</sup> Pastoralism, as an economic strategy and ecological adaptation in connection with mobility, has been a popular category of investigation for anthropologists, especially beginning in the late 1960s when a wealth of new ethnographic information from the Middle East and Central Asia became available (e.g. Irons and Dyson-Hudson 1972; Nelson 1973; *l'Equipe écologie et anthropologie des sociétés pastorales* 1979; Fabietti and Salzman 1996). Being associated with tribalism, which anthropologists have struggled to define, pastoralism served as a convenient means by which to define a class of human societies on a concrete, economic basis in order to search for patterns of economic, social, political, and ecological commonalities. Such studies have most often been focused on those societies that practice mobile production strategies, especially to the exclusion of any long-term or intensive agricultural production (but see Salzman, ed. 1980, and Fabietti and Salzman, eds. 1996). Although scholars have traditionally differed in opinion on the relative importance of roles played in mobile pastoral communities by ecological as opposed to economic factors in shaping sociopolitical systems, and also to what degree patterns of mobility are shaped by sociopolitical concerns, or are influenced by ecology and, in turn, influence the sociopolitical system (e.g. Burnham 1979; Irons 1979; Asad 1979; Khazanov 1984: 37), it is commonly accepted, nevertheless, that such mobile pastoral societies have in common descent, lineage, and segmentation as notable aspects of their political systems (e.g. Khazanov 1984: 120; Salzman 1996a: 25).

<sup>105</sup> “pastoralism, n.” OED Online. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138629>

<sup>106</sup> At the same time, specialized pastoralism implies some degree of mobility by necessity (cf. Khazanov 1984: 37; Salzman 1996b: 152).

result of either a periodic availability of pasturage, for instance due to seasonal weather patterns, or because herds exhaust pasturage and must periodically be moved from place to place, or because of other ecological factors such as disease, predation, etc. The nature of this mobility can vary widely, though it usually involves the movement of the residential unit to some degree along with the means of production, i.e., the herds. This capacity, even requirement, for mobility precludes the development of relationships of political hierarchy, not only between polities such as a tribe and a sedentary state, but also the internal development of political hierarchy within a tribe. Fundamental to the structuring principle of balanced opposition is the maintenance of such political equality. The development of hierarchical political relationships would warp political actions, contradicting structuring principles of segmentary lineage systems, thereby creating institutional friction, which would eventually lead to a change in sociopolitical structure that would mark a departure from these systems. The full political implications of the development of hierarchical political power within segmentary lineage societies will be described in the next section.

The second source of congruence between segmentary lineage systems and pastoralism concerns the regulation of access to natural resources. In order to maintain herds of livestock, two resources in particular are vitally necessary: natural pasture and water.<sup>107</sup> As Khazanov noted from his comparative study of historically and ethnographically attested pastoral migrations,

... it is need of suitable pasture for the livestock which more than anything else determines the character and need itself of pastoral migrations amongst nomads.

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<sup>107</sup> In specific conditions other resources might be rare enough to pose a special consideration for pastoral communities. Khazanov (1984: 39) lists several, for instance salt, insect infestations, and epidemics.

As the Lokai Uzbek say: 'The food of stock is on the ground, if stock feed from human hands they will never be sated.'

Khazanov 1984: 37

In order to sate those stock, pastoralists require constant access to an adequate amount of pasture and water. To complicate matters further, unreliable or variable weather patterns can lead to annual fluctuations in resource availability and can cause large amounts of variation in resource availability, even on a local scale. Relatively predictable seasonal variability can result in more regular migrations, but to the extent that variability is endemic and not seasonal, migration patterns can be less predictable and more frequent. Segmentary lineage systems, which hold land in common among tribal members, are an effective way of managing access to resources under these conditions. No individual in the tribe 'owns' the land either in part or in total, but all share access to its resources by virtue of their membership in the descent system, permitting free movement within the territory and free assortment on the basis of unpredictable resource distribution. At the same time, the segmentary nature of the system provides a means for defense of common concerns against outside polities by facilitating large-scale mobilizations of man-power to respond to collective threats on territory or natural resources, or to exert pressure outward during periods of resource stress (cf. Sahlins 1961b).

A third point of congruence between pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems, following from the two prior points, is the free movement and economic interaction of member households in a tribal territory, independent of their lineage identification. Risk to herds from theft, disease, predation, and inadequate access to pasturage and water can to some extent be mitigated by the dispersal of herding groups. To a great extent, segmentary lineage groups have been shown to display a certain economic solidarity and

moral imperative to contribute livestock to their impoverished members (e.g. Salzman 1994: 171). At the same time, segmentation and balanced opposition allow for the safe dispersal of members of a single lineage group throughout the territory of the segmentary lineage society through the guarantee of their protection and that of their property by self-help. In other words, segmentary lineage systems allow for the dispersal of herds, and therefore households, by providing a system of legal and political safeguards. Economic relations between members of different segments, then, do not contradict the segmentary political structure of society, but are instead made possible by that structure—they presuppose it (Salzman 1996a: 30).

Segmentary lineage systems, then, are well suited to subsistence-based production strategies, where individual households are the fundamental economic units of a society, mobility is a necessary part of their subsistence pursuits, and some natural resources must be made available for collective access while, nevertheless, some of the most important means of production remained privately owned and managed by those households—i.e., herds. In a structural sense, then, moral political action, as it is defined by the structuring principles of segmentary lineage systems—unilineal segmentation and balanced opposition—is fully commensurate with the actual political and long-term material interests of individuals engaged in pastoral production. Thus we can understand the case of the scorned, yet loyal Yomut son reported by Irons:

I had a violent argument with my father and he threw me out of his house with nothing at all. Two days later my father had a dispute with someone. I went and found that person and beat him. I beat him furiously. After I had done this, I was still on bad terms with my father. But, I had to fight for him; he's my father after all.

Irons 1975: 114

Such a turn of events only makes sense in the context of a segmentary lineage system.<sup>108</sup>

The sense of ‘tribalism’ as, in some sense, the political aspect of mobile pastoralism, has persisted from the period of the Enlightenment, when the word tribe made its way into modern language, as discussed in the previous chapter, and even to the beginning of modern ethnographic and ethnohistorical research in the Old World (cf. Bacon 1958). The reason offered here for this association is that the shared interests assumed by a ‘tribal’ (i.e. segmentary lineage) sociopolitical structure are completely congruent with an economic system based on traditional pastoralism, which requires mobility and protects the private property of livestock, all the while holding access to natural resources in common (e.g. Salzman 1980b: 106).

Despite the congruency between pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems that has been established above, and their historical associations, it is commonly held that mobile pastoralists are dependent on sedentary populations. Particularly influential in this regard is Anatoly Khazanov’s opinion that mobile pastoral producers rarely forego other economic or subsistence pursuits (Khazanov 1984: 78). Khazanov argued that there is a necessity for supplementary subsistence among mobile pastoralists for two reasons. First, because a specialized pastoral subsistence form “itself cannot provide even all the immediate requirements of nomads,” (1984: 70). In other words, the products necessary for subsistence cannot be fully supplied through exploitation of herd animals alone. Excepting some extreme circumstances, such a statement can be taken as

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<sup>108</sup> This is not to say that some amount of personal affection—most certainly at a minimum at that point in time—did not play a role in dictating the actions of the evicted son. Nor am I arguing that he was motivated solely by a vulgar, material sense of where his interests lay. The son was acting in a moral capacity, certainly, but that morality was defined by the segmentary lineage system, adapted to an economic reality where his future ability to provide for his own and his future household’s subsistence rested upon the political solidarity of his patrilineal segment for the preservation of its status relative to other households and segments, regardless of internal disagreement or dispute.

obvious and it is not my intention to challenge this point. Khazanov's second reason, though, lies upon a dubious foundation. The second reason a pastoral economy requires additional sources to meet subsistence is "because its economy is extensive and allows no permanent solution to the problem of balance at the expense of intensification of production" (1984: 72). This point is somewhat complex and builds on the observations of a number of other ethnographers. Essentially it pertains to a problem of demographic homeostasis for nomadic pastoral producers, relying on a balance of three different factors: natural resources (primarily pasture and water), herd population size, and human population size (1984: 70). A balance must be maintained between those three factors, Khazanov pointed out, lest the subsistence system be in jeopardy of collapse. Mobile pastoral economies demonstrate an inherent inability to maintain that balance, according to Khazanov, as a result of the natural periodic variability among those variables, and the inability, due to the nature of pastoral production in a traditional economy, to *intensify* productive capabilities to make up for productive shortfalls. Instead, in order to maintain a balance, Khazanov argued, pastoralists must seek to *extensify* productive efforts in the short-term to insure their own economic well-being in periods of homeostatic imbalance and crisis (1984: 76-78).<sup>109</sup> The implication, then, is that because nomadic pastoral societies exist anywhere, they have everywhere pursued extensification strategies, otherwise they would had to have sedentarized and ceased a mobile pastoral subsistence strategy. The potential for mobile pastoralists to maintain economic, political, and

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<sup>109</sup> It should be noted that such a strategy, which guarantees long-term homeostasis (1984: 76), is made possible through the segmentary lineage system, which, as described above, provides for private ownership of herds, thereby providing a profit motive for the extensification of production. This is what led Paine to describe pastoralists as "rudimentary capitalists" (1971: 170). As Khazanov rightly pointed out, these pastoralists are generally not capable of long-term economic growth (1984: 76), nevertheless the segmentary lineage system provides the impetus to grow one's own herd, a private reserve of economic, social, and to some extent, political capital.



cultural autarky from sedentary populations is of particular significance in EBA Syria, a period of unprecedented sedentarization, urbanization, and agricultural extensification in that region. Thus, it is important to closely examine Khazanov's argument against autarky.

Khazanov specified a number of strategies through which balance can be sought through extensification, as noted in the literature, which, he believes, are nonetheless doomed to failure. First, he argued that both the material shortcomings of pastoral specialization and the problem of maintaining homeostasis in a pastoral economy requires the exploitation of other natural and agricultural resources. At the same time, however, he maintained that within a system of pastoral specialization this supplementary subsistence activity will be insufficient (1984: 78-79). A second method of extensification is the opening of new pastures, as accomplished by physical expansion of territory, perhaps even violently (1984: 79). However, such expansion "could never be constant and stable, if only for the reason that it was too dependent on the balance of forces" (1984: 80). Furthermore, even if these new borders could be maintained against external aggression, the resulting population and herd growth would eventually lead to congestion, which would again require expansion (1984: 80-81). Presumably, the seizure of livestock from neighboring populations of both sedentarists and other pastoralists would be limited for much the same reasons (1984: 81). Instead, Khazanov stressed the point that pastoral nomads required both handicrafts (1984: 82) and supplementary nutrition (1984: 78-79) from sedentary societies. "In this way, economic instability and non-autarky can be considered as almost indispensable attributes of a pastoral nomadic economy. Nomads have had two alternative ways of overcoming them" (1984: 83). The

first being sedentarization (ibid), which results in the complete destruction of the nomadic pastoral system. The only other alternative is the “acquisition by different methods of needed products from neighboring sedentary societies” (1984: 84)—i.e. trading, raiding, or some kind of patronage. Khazanov’s ultimate point is this: “the adaptation of nomadic economy to its environment is incomplete” (ibid). In other words, then, ‘nomadic’ or ‘specialized’ pastoralism is by necessity a niche ecological adaptation that is dependent upon external (sedentary) societies to maintain an adequate homeostasis, ensuring the ongoing endurance of that mode of subsistence. In this way, Khazanov attempted to justify the claim that “The non-autarky, in many... the anti-autarky of [pastoral nomadic] economy, means that their social and political organization cannot be fully autonomous and that culturally to a certain degree they are not self-sufficient” (1984: 122).

Khazanov’s picture of pastoral nomadic society as non-autarkic, even anti-autarkic in some cases, cannot be accepted for all mobile pastoral producers *a priori*. The premise that mobile pastoralists are, by nature, incapable of homeostasis is false. Khazanov’s arrival at this conclusion results from a tautology. At the beginning of his argument he clearly addressed “a specialized pastoral economy” which “in itself cannot provide even all the immediate requirements of nomads,” (1984: 70). By the end of his argument, where he addresses the phenomenon of supplementary forms of economic activity more directly, he has, as if by sleight of hand, transformed those specialized producers into more generalized “nomads”:

It is no coincidence that among many nomads a striving to increase their production base by direct utilization of the products of nature may be observed,

meaning that hunting, gathering and even fishing are widespread amongst these nomads as supplementary forms of economic activity.

Khazanov 1984: 78

He continued, “food-extracting economies in the capacity of supplementary economic activity cannot, of course, solve the essence of the problem—the instability and one-sidedness of pastoral nomadism” (1984: 79). This transformation, at least in the minds of many in Khazanov’s scholarly audience, if not himself, and the statement that, as a result, all pastoral producers are politically and culturally dependent on sedentary societies is effected by a rejection of “the division suggested by Salzman (1971) of pastoral nomadism into the pure and multi-resource varieties” (1971: 78). This rejection is no simple matter, though it is treated by Khazanov only in passing. Few would argue with the point that specialized pastoralists are dependent upon sedentary societies. If they were not, then what would be the meaning of specialization? The idealized, specialized pastoral producers that Khazanov considers are just that, specialized, to the point that they are unable to meet their own subsistence requirements. As a result of assuming a simple correlation between mobility and specialization, one which a review of the ethnographic literature does not support, such a reading of Khazanov that projects his conclusion to all mobile pastoralists misses the subtler and more profitable question of *how specialized* a pastoral society must be *such that it is not autarkic*. This obscures the fact that the level of pastoral specialization in a society falls along a continuum from a multi-resource economy to economic specialization, usually geared towards market exchange, a fact which will be demonstrated below through reference to two specific pastoral societies as examples.

At the moment, though, it is important to point out that, underlying Khazanov's argument here is his *a priori* misjudgment of the significance of segmentary lineage structuring principles (cf. 1984: 119-20). He noted that "the main peculiarities of the native model of many... nomads are notions about society as an expanding family or minimum lineage, the descent principle and genealogy," (1984: 120) but he did not feel that enough was yet known in 1984 to work out a specific structural model of nomadic (i.e. pastoral) society (1984: 122).<sup>110</sup> Khazanov was especially dubious of using folk models as sociological models and discounted them as only one component of a sociological whole, being both an influence upon and a reflection of "the economic, social and political relations within [society]" (1984: 119). For that reason, he maintained that "the reflection cannot be completely adequate (society cannot fully explain itself), and its influence cannot be completely spontaneous" (1984: 119-20). The argument I present here does not preclude this duality, but instead seeks to understand the contradiction in terms of structuration. When that approach is adopted, it becomes clear that Khazanov's opinion of folk models has been influenced by mobile pastoral societies that either never were segmentary lineage systems, or are so *no longer*—i.e., those societies that have had their segmentary lineage systems compromised by transformation of their social, political, or economic systems. In part then, the source of Khazanov's error lay in the ethnographic and historical sources for his study in the first place. Those mobile pastoral societies best attested historically are more likely to have been heavily engaged with sedentary societies. History, in that sense, has a something of a sample bias. Likewise, most ethnographic information from modern contexts is likely to come

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<sup>110</sup> Khazanov, then, falls prey to the common error of assuming that degrees of difference in mobility correlate to degrees of difference in the social and political nature of sedentary and mobile societies.

from pastoral groups that have been heavily effected by incorporation by or encapsulation within sedentary states, as a result of overwhelming and irresistible military technology, or fundamental economic changes brought on by modern marketplaces, massive irrigation programs, etc., which have effectively changed the economic context and led to structural changes as well. Without an adequate structural and historical perspective gained from the folk models of various mobile pastoral groups, it is impossible to appreciate this fact. An economic approach only further obscures this relationship, as it seeks to identify regularities among societies that are structurally distinct, being not, or no longer, segmentary lineage societies.

It is not argued here that a mobile pastoral society is, by definition, autarkic, and that this autarky leads necessarily to political independence and autonomy. What is argued is that such a determination cannot be made *a priori*. Autarky and a multi-resource subsistence focus can be shown to vary independently of mobility in pastoral societies and, when paired with mobility, they can be shown to correlate with segmentary lineage systems. It is necessary to point out, though, that this situation will also be influenced by political, ecological, and technological factors. The example of the Sarhadi Baluch, below, will demonstrate that a society can be both mobile pastoral and autarkic. The Sarhadi Baluch will then be contrasted with the Basseri of the Khamseh Confederacy, a society which is both highly specialized and has lost its segmentary lineage system in practice, if not entirely in discourse. A result of this comparison is the suggestion that segmentary lineage systems, fully commensurate with mobile pastoralism, actually *presuppose* and *reproduce* a high degree of autarky.

### *The Sarhadi Baluch*

The Sarhadi Baluch, especially the Yarahmadzai tribe, were the focus of an ethnographic study by Philip Carl Salzman that took place over the course of 26 months in three different periods, from 1967 to 1976 (2000). During that time their population numbered approximately five thousand individuals, nearly all of whom lived for most of the year in temporary tent structures and practiced a mobile and pastoral way of life, keeping small flocks of sheep and goats for the exploitation of their primary and secondary products, and a few camels, the latter mainly for use as transportation and beasts of burden, in addition to pursuing a suite of other economic activities. Only a few generations before the period of Salzman's study, in the 1930s, the Sarhadi Baluch were pacified by, and geographically and bureaucratically encapsulated within, the state of Iran. Historical documents and the oral accounts of older Sarhadi Baluch demonstrate that a segmentary lineage system preceded that pacification. The details of Salzman's study demonstrate that this system continued to persist afterwards as a result of a number of different factors, which were historically contingent, but also dependent upon the wide economic base of the Sarhadi Baluch society. These historical contingencies will be explored in more detail below. The present goal is to establish the sociopolitical and economic characteristics of the Sarhadi Baluch that Salzman observed during his study.

For most of the year the Sarhadi Baluch occupied the arid Sarhad Plateau in the northern part of Baluchistan province in southeastern Iran, near the borders with both Pakistan and Afghanistan. This plateau receives rainfall almost exclusively in the winter months. This rainfall is sparse and cannot usually support any crops without some kind of artificial irrigation or water retention strategy. Salzman reported that, in the years

spanning 1963-67 and 1971-76, the average annual rainfall varied between 39 mm and 212 mm, averaging just 131 mm, and falling mostly in the winter months (2000: 91). He noted, too, a pattern of recurring drought years (2000: 97). In addition to aridity, the high elevation of the Sarhad Plain, around 1698 m, results in cold winters, commonly with freezing nightly temperatures. These temperatures were dangerous for sheep and goat and required that during the coldest months of winter, flocks had to be sheltered at night—and sometimes all day in the case of a snowstorm, within the tents of the Baluch, who then had to provide them with fodder from secondary sources saved especially for that purpose throughout the year (2000: 102).

The Sarhadi Baluch possessed a unilinear segmentary lineage system informed by a principle of balanced opposition (2000: 235-38). That this system was fundamental to the operation of Sarhadi Baluch social and political structures at the time, and was more than mere folk model, is apparent from a number of different situations recorded by Salzman, including the following exchange, which took place each time the Baluch would ask Salzman how large his own paternal lineage was:

When I answered that where we came from we did not have lineages, there was a kind of stunned silence. The standard follow-up was, ‘What do you do if you get into trouble; who do you go to?’ My reply that we go to the police to get help always generated great mirth and raucous laughter, a reaction similar to what we would hear in less advantaged parts of our own society.

Salzman 2000: 231

It would be a mistake to assume that the skepticism the Sarhadi Baluch showed to the effectiveness of police in providing for the social welfare and ensuring personal safety was entirely a result of an adversarial relationship with the Iranian gendarmerie. It stemmed primarily from the fact that theirs was a segmentary lineage system—paternal

connections were politically paramount and only these ensured personal safety and equal rights in day-to-day interactions.

This is not to say that relationships with affines were not important. This was true especially on the ‘international’ level on the Sarhad, or the level of relationships between tribes, such as the Yarahmadzai and the Gamshadzai, where political unity was not based upon appeal to a common heritage as much as upon common political interests (2000: 260). Within the segmentary lineage system, marriage had the potential to create common economic bonds between households and lineages that would influence political action, but never violated the politically preeminent value of agnatic lineage solidarity. One instance given by Salzman where a political alliance among affines was particularly clear is in the case of stolen palm trunks:

Mahmud Karim was furious. It was August 25, 1972, at the Dadolzai *bonend*, settlement, of the Gorani date groves, at the Mashkil drainage basin. Some palm trunks that Mahmud Karim had prepared... for the roof of his new *ban*, mud-brick dwelling, had been carried off by Nezar of the neighboring Kamil Hanzai *bonend*...

What Mahmud Karim wanted to do was to gather up a party of men to go with him and take back the trunks, and to fight for them if the Kamil Hanzai put up any resistance. A number of individuals from the *bonend* joined Mahmud Karim in this foray: seven Dadolzai and four non-Dadolzai....

This confrontation was spoken of by Karim and the others in terms of lineages, the Dadolzai versus the Kamil Hanzai... Usually these lineages were thought of as being close. Not only were they neighbors, but there were some prominent affinal alliances between them. Ja’far’s mother was Kamil Hanzai, so they were his matrikin. But this did not stop Ja’far from supporting Mahmud Karim and allowing his two sons-in-law to accompany Karim. After all, in this context—as my Baluchi informants rhetorically put it—it is the father’s side that counts; one takes women from anywhere.

Among the Dadolzai party going on the retrieval foray, eight were Dadolzai and four were not. The first four on the list were immediate kin of Mahmud Karim, members of the same informal but ongoing “work team” and lineage mates in the Dadolzai *brasrend*. The next three were coresidents and members of the Dadolzai *brasrend*, but members of other microlineages, subdivisions of the Dadolzai. The final four were associated with the Dadolzai, one as son-in-law and coresident and the others as coresidents. Of these four, two



were from the Gamshadzai tribe, one was from a lineage more distant than the two in the conflict, and the other was from a lineage that was structurally equidistant.

Salzman 2000: 262-64

That most of the members of this party were of the same lineage as the offended man is not surprising. The composition of the party also demonstrates that patrilineal considerations carry more political weight than affinal connections, nonetheless the last four members of the party attest to the possible political importance of these connections as a basis of communal political action in such a situation where that action does not contradict paternal lines of descent. Despite common interests stemming from this propinquity, paternal lineage solidarity still clearly trumped these economic interests and alliances, as is demonstrated by the following case, where a dispute between the Rahmatzai and Dadolzai became violent and ultimately necessitated the movement of a Rahmatzai household, which was cohabiting with a group of Dadolzai, who were nevertheless uninvolved in the initial conflict between the two lineages:

One of the coresidents of the Dadolzai was Isa, son of Rasul, Rahmatzai... The Dadolzai stood behind their Rahmatzai *mamas*, son-in-law, saying that he was under their protection, and, as a consequence, or so was the understanding in the minds of the Dadolzai, there were no attacks on him.

On August 29, as had been planned for reasons unrelated to the conflict, Isa left Mashkil for Khash. In Khash, he met Sab Han... who had come to gather up Rahmatzai to return to Mashkil so that they could support their fellow lineage mates... Sab Han recruited Isa to return to Mashkil and join the other Rahmatzai. He agreed and left the Dadolzai, switching his residence to his lineage mates. It was said among the Dadolzai that, if necessary, Isa would fight against his Dadolzai in-laws.

Salzman 2000: 267-68

At the time of Salzman's study, there was a clear pattern of political fracture along the lines of paternal descent, as reflected in the situations above and also in the idea, often

cited to Salzman, that while one's skin came from one's mother, one's blood and bone came from the father (2000: 228).

In terms of their basic economic and domestic structure, the Sarhadi Baluch were organized along the lines of what would be expected of mobile pastoralists with a segmentary lineage system. The primary residential, political, and economic units of the Sarhadi Baluch were nuclear households composed of a married couple and their offspring. As was the case for the Yomut, above, the Baluch household collectively owned its own household goods, including its tent and all domestic accouterments. It also owned its own flock of sheep and goats. The male head of the household was ultimately in control of this property and also decided when and where to migrate with his herd and household (2000: 188). The household, ideally, used its own property and its own labor to produce everything it needed for its own consumption. The economy of the Sarhadi Baluch, then, was essentially subsistence based (2000: 90). Each member of the Yarahmadzai tribe, by virtue of their membership through patrilineal descent, had access to any and all naturally occurring resources in the Yarahmadzai tribal lands, an area which totaled about twenty-thousand square kilometers (2000: 98). In principle, then, within that territory each household was free to move when, where, and how it wished. In practice, however, households tended to coagulate into camps, or *halk*, composed of any number of tents, but in Salzman's experience between one and twenty, while "the overall average of 22 *halk* (not a systematic sample) was 6 tents" (2000: 65). There were many functions to a camp group and many different factors governing its size and composition. The primary factor, though, was labor related to each household's flock of sheep and goats:

...the formal constitution of a camp, *halk*, was based upon an annual herding contract, *karar*, thus making a camping group, in an official sense, a herding group. The contract was made between all livestock owners, *wasildar*... and a shepherd, *shwaneg*, for the herding of the collective flock of small stock, *pas*, goats and sheep, for one year, spelling out terms of work and payment. There was, as a matter of principle, only one flock per camp; in a formal sense, a camp was an epiphenomenon and the human manifestation of a flock of *pas*.

2000: 49

An important consideration in camp group composition, then, was the size of the flock of a camp group. It could be neither too large to handle or pasture, nor so small that the payment to any potential shepherd, rendered as a percentage of live births over the course of that year, would be unsatisfying. At the same time, the amount of adult labor in the camp group was a concern, as well as providing an adequate number of men for security, and finally all the members needed to be able to cooperate and compromise on decisions that would affect the entire camp, especially decisions regarding the migration of the camp group (2000: 49-50). Decisions about migration were generally made in response to local or “micro-climatic variations” and the need to provide the flock with access to adequate pasture and water (2000: 91). Because the flocks of many households were treated as one, these decisions were usually arrived at collectively (2000: 50, 98). As stated above, a segmentary lineage system is characterized by the existence of unilineal segments that operate on both social and political levels. Nevertheless each household enjoys theoretically unlimited freedom in the organization of its own economic and labor relationships. For this reason, although camp groups in segmentary lineage societies might tend to form around a core cluster of agnatically related households, their compositions do not have to follow such a pattern as a rule. This observation characterizes the situation among the Sarhadi Baluch, whose camps generally had a

patrilineal core, but often included affines, cognates, and other households not agnatically related (2000: 52).

Although the adequate provisioning of sheep and goat herds determined the composition of, and most of the migration decisions undertaken by camp groups in the Sarhad, the herd sizes of individual households were usually not very large. Salzman found herd sizes on average to be below “the 40 adult *pas* that Sarhadi Baluch said is the number needed to support a family,” (2000: 93). Additionally, “their sizes fluctuated, sometimes substantially and sometimes rapidly. Household herds fluctuated according to human intent... Herds fluctuated against their owners’ intent through disease, injury, wandering, theft, and, above all, drought” (2000: 94). These usually small, volatile household herds were relied on to an extent directly as a supply of food in part through their meat, but primarily through dairy products, including fresh and sour milk, yogurt, clarified and unclarified butter, and dried milk solids (2000: 73-75). “After bread, dairy products were the most important staple, providing a significant portion of calories and being the main dietary source of proteins, fats, calcium, and other nutrients and vitamins...” (2000: 73).

Despite their preoccupation with the welfare of their herds, the economy of the Sarhadi Baluch was characterized by a broad, multiple-resource focus:

This diversification... found in the Sarhad of Baluchistan contrasts with specialization, the concentration on one kind of production directed toward one main kind of product. The Sarhadi multi-resource economy thus provided both a diversity of products and at the same time provided insurance in case of failure in one or another productive sector.

Salzman 2000: 89

The other economic pursuits of the Sarhadi Baluch included date palm arboriculture, small-scale agriculture, hunting and gathering, smuggling and trading, and wage labor

both inside and outside of the Sarhad, as well as outside of Iran, mainly across the Persian Gulf in the Arabian Peninsula (2000: 90).

The most prevalent and important of these economic pursuits, after of herding, was definitely date palm arboriculture. The date palms owned and harvested by the Sarhadi Baluch were not located in the Sarhad Plateau, where no conditions exist conducive to the cultivation of dates. They were, instead, located in an area of lower elevation in a desert basin to the east of the Sarhad, near to, and in one case across, the border with Pakistan (2000: 107).<sup>111</sup> The presence of abundant groundwater in this area did not necessitate any irrigation or long-term attention to ensure the health of the trees or an adequate crop of dates. “The Baluch were thus able to absent themselves from the groves and go about their other business on the Sarhad or elsewhere for most of the year, coming to the groves only for two weeks of pollination in the spring and two months of harvest in high summer” (2000: 110). Like livestock, date palms were individually owned and passed on through inheritance to a man’s sons, just as other property among the Sarhadi Baluch, and, also as with livestock, the primary and secondary products of date palm arboriculture were two vital sources of subsistence and material wealth among the Sarhadi Baluch (2000: 118). Although date harvests varied annually from household to household, Salzman stated that, nevertheless, “...it would be safe to conclude that most Sarhadi Baluch date producers provided their families with several kilos of dates per week for the entire year,” a not insignificant source of valuable calories in the Sarhad (2000: 121), and also a resource that was traded to Persian agriculturalists for grain

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<sup>111</sup> The border between Iran and Pakistan actually jogs east to include most of these date palm groves belonging to the Sarhadi Baluch within the borders Iran. This feature of the border was initially set in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, seemingly because the Sarhadi Baluch by this time were already exploiting these resources (2000: 109).

(2000: 126). Date cultivation was also an important source of fodder for livestock (2000: 101-102) and secondary products from the palms themselves provided raw materials for the manufacture of equipment necessary to both date harvesting and mobile, tent living (2000: 123).

Another important source of subsistence witnessed by Salzman was the cultivation of grain and garden crops. Only recently before Salzman's study had agricultural works of any great scale become possible on the Sarhad, thanks to modern irrigation technology (ibid). A traditional method involved the harnessing of runoff water into a garden. "In this pattern, a flat area at the bottom of a runoff channel, a gully, running down from an area of higher elevation... would be enclosed by a simple retaining wall, *gwarband*, of soil" (2000: 124). The melting snow or ice, or rainwater would then be captured behind the retaining wall. The drawback of this form of agriculture related only to the poor and unpredictable rainfall and snowfall patterns in the Sarhad Plateau. Often, the investment of labor and seed was lost. Its viability, however, lay in the fact that it required very little labor and had the potential to provide a small crop (ibid). The remains of *kan*, or *qanat*, irrigation systems were also to be found throughout Baluchistan, having once supported an agricultural population that apparently preceded the inhabitation of the area by the Sarhadi Baluch (2000: 124-25). The Baluch, however, had an historic aversion to the renovation and restoration of these underground canals, partly because they lacked the technical knowledge, ability, and resources to maintain them, but also due to a cultural aversion, "for it involved stationary residence and onerous physical labor" (2000: 125). Since the encapsulation and pacification of the Sarhadi Baluch by the Iranian government in 1935, however, there had been an increased

focus on agricultural pursuits on the Sarhad Plateau. This was especially true with the “development of irrigation agriculture throughout the Sarhad during the postwar period, especially in the 1960s” (2000: 125-26). Among the tribe of Sarhadi Baluch studied most closely by Salzman, the Yarahmadzai, when agricultural production was pursued, a two-crop rotation was followed. Winter wheat was the primary crop and was preferred because it was more valuable for trade, barley being grown in the summer, and both crops relying almost totally upon irrigation water (2000: 126-27). “The cultivation of other edible grains (corn), vegetables (beetroot, onions), fruit (apples, apricots, grapes, pomegranates, watermelon)…, and other crops (alfalfa, cotton) was very limited and irregularly distributed throughout the areas of cultivation” (2000: 127).

Crops of grain were grown in open fields, access to which was shared by right of membership in the segmentary lineage system. The limiting factor of agriculture in the Sarhad Plateau, instead of land, was access to the water with which to irrigate fields. Unlike natural rainfall and snowmelt runoff water, which was shared by all Sarhadi Baluch because it was deemed to have come from God, water provided by man-made activities was understood to belong to those individuals who produced them. In this way,

the control of *kan* and more recently pumps was crucial for access to agricultural resources. Shares were specified in irrigation hours within a temporal sequence... The volume of water produced by a particular water source determined the value of that water source.

Salzman 2000: 127

Among the Sarhadi Baluch, *kan* construction and maintenance “has frequently been a lineage-based collective endeavor, although with allocated shares and individual rights of alienation” (2000: 128). Although Salzman noted that “only a modest percentage” of Yarahmadzai had direct access to irrigation water, many more still had an interest in the

system because of kin connections and sharecropping wages which were often paid in grain. Often, an agricultural household could not meet the labor requirements of its agricultural interests and would in that case turn to sharecropping.

The usual arrangements among tribesmen in the Sarhad was for labor to receive 3 of 10 parts of the crop, water to receive 6 of 10 parts, and the plow animal, ox or camel, to receive 1 of 10 parts. Each sharecropper, *shark*, had also the use of a small area of land, and the water to irrigate it, for his own cultivation.

Salzman 2000: 128

Annual returns on agricultural investments varied greatly from place to place and household to household, depending upon the state of the irrigation system, especially *qanats*, which required large investments for their maintenance (2000: 129), and the role of the each family in the system, ranging “from the few *man* of grain gained by laboring during the harvest to the hundreds of *man* of grain coming to the few larger owners” (2000: 129-130).<sup>112</sup> In nearly all cases these agricultural products were consumed within the household and never traded away (2000: 130). Along with livestock and date palms, then, access to irrigation water was an important potential productive economic and subsistence resource.

The emerging importance of irrigation agriculture for the Sarhadi Baluch was not the only recent change that Salzman noted for their subsistence-focused economy. Trading, smuggling, and wage labor, both domestic and abroad, were recent developments that, Salzman argued, along with agricultural production were necessitated by the end of raiding brought on by the Iranian state’s military pacification of the Sarhadi Baluch and at the same time made possible through the state’s bureaucratic encapsulation of the Sarhad (2000: 136). From both historical sources and Salzman’s own Baluchi informants it seems that raiding was a frequent practice of the Sarhadi Baluch before

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<sup>112</sup> 1 *man* is roughly equivalent to 5 kilograms (2000: 370).



pacification in the 1930s. “It was not unusual for raiding parties to ride out once a month. Usually there were two large excursions each year... One of the primary purposes, they said, was the capture of livestock... Other portable valuables... were carried off as well” (2000: 135). Salzman argued, convincingly, that raiding was a necessary part of the subsistence economy of the Sarhad at this time, the region being otherwise so harsh that subsistence could not be met from relatively risky and annually variable milk and meat products and date cultivation. In fact, in this same period, Salzman recorded that “it was not uncommon for tribesmen, usually in large groups, to travel to agricultural areas outside of the Sarhad and exchange livestock, livestock products, and dates for grain” (2000: 135-36). At the time of Salzman’s study, in the early to mid-1970s, raiding was no longer a possible source of income in the Sarhad, however encapsulation by the Iranian state and its bureaucratic system allowed for two important economic pursuits that fulfilled a similar role to raiding in the previous period, trading/smuggling, and wage labor. At that time, “Most Sarhadi Baluch were engaged in short-term seasonal migrant labor,” mostly in the season where their labor was missed least on the Plateau, during the winter (2000: 137). Salzman pointed out that, like raiding, trading and wage labor both had the effect of bringing into the Sarhad income from external, sedentary sources (2000: 136).

In this way, the independent Sarhadi Baluch tribesmen of the periods both prior and subsequent to military pacification do not seem to have been entirely autarkic. I maintain, nevertheless, that Khazanov’s argument that no mobile pastoral societies can be autarkic, and also as a consequence, cannot be politically or culturally autonomous, must be rejected in light of this example. Here, the economic non-autarky of the Sarhadi

Baluch was partially a result of the restraints of their habitat, the harsh physical environment of the Sarhad Plateau. Had adequate nutritional resources been available, trade for grain and periodic raiding, although possibly desirable, would have been economically unnecessary. Nevertheless, the Sarhadi Baluch were clearly autarkic enough to enjoy political independence prior to their encapsulation by the Iranian state, and effectively even after this, given the indirect approach of governance that the state took towards the tribe. Khazanov's argument (1984: 79), that supplementary subsistence pursuits, such as hunting and gathering—both of which played an important role in the Sarhad, both at the time of Salzman's study, and perhaps even more so in the period of political independence before the 1930s (2000: 131-32)—do not provide a homeostatic demographic balance, is no more true, *a priori*, for a mobile pastoral society than for a mobile hunting and gathering society. His claim that “the non-autarky, in many cases I would even say the anti-autarky of their economy, means that their social and political organization cannot be fully autonomous and that culturally to a certain degree they are not self-sufficient,” (Khazanov 1984: 122) simply does not follow from an example such as the Sarhadi Baluch, who throughout history have demonstrated a broad subsistence economy that resulted in relative autarky and independence before their confrontation with modern military technology, where it even then only acquiesced grudgingly, and still maintained what was essentially a segmentary lineage system at the time of Salzman's study.

The maintenance of a relatively high degree of autarky among the Sarhadi Baluch was integral to the maintenance of their segmentary lineage system. It is enough here to demonstrate the correlation. The point will become more obvious in the following

section dealing with political authority and tribal systems, where the history of the Sarhadi Baluch will be analyzed in more detail.

### *The Basseri of Fars Province*

In contrast with the Sarhadi Baluch, the Basseri of Fars province in southwestern Iran, at the time of their study between December 1957 and July of 1958 by Frederik Barth, reflect the non-autarkic, politically dominated, and culturally dependent nomadic pastoral society described by Khazanov in *Nomads and the Outside World*. In his study, Barth refers to the Basseri as a tribe, and although they resemble the Sarhadi Baluch in many aspects of their daily lives and activities, they are much more specialized in their subsistence focus on pastoral production and, though structuring principles pertaining to a segmentary lineage system constitute a discursive model of moral political action, these structures are not followed in practice. It is maintained here that this disjuncture is best explained through historical changes to the economic and political context of Basseri life, which were relatively recent at the time of Barth's study. At the moment, however, it is necessary to review some basic ecological, economic, and sociopolitical features of their society.

At the time of his study, Barth found the Basseri to be nomadic, tent-dwelling pastoralists, numbering some sixteen thousand individuals overall, or approximately two to three thousand households, who migrated seasonally according to a traditional schedule, north and south over a distance of some three hundred miles through a narrow twenty to fifty mile corridor, which was referred to as a tribal road (Barth 1961: 1, 5).

The habitat of the Basseri tribe lies in the hot and arid zone around latitude 30 N bordering on the Persian Gulf. It spans a considerable ecologic range from south

to north, ranging from low-lying salty and torrid deserts around Lar at elevations of 2,000 to 3,000 ft. to high mountains in the north, culminating in the Kuh-i-Bul at 13,000 ft. Precipitation is uniformly low, around 10", but falls mainly in the winter and then as snow in the higher regions, so a considerable amount is conserved for the shorter growing season in that area. This permits considerable vegetation and occasional stands of forest to develop in the mountains. In the southern lowlands, on the other hand, very rapid run-off and a complete summer drought limits vegetation, apart from the hardiest desert scrubs, to a temporary grass cover in the rainy season of winter and early spring.

Barth 1961: 3-4

The impetus to long seasonal and shorter intra-seasonal migration is entirely the result of the pastoral production focus of the Basseri, their primary and nearly exclusive economic activity, which depended on the availability of extensive pastures to maintain large herds of sheep and goats. Like the Sarhadi Baluch, above, the Basseri exploited these herd animals for direct consumption, but more importantly and sustainably for their secondary products, including both fiber and dairy products. Milk and milk products, including cheese, sour milk, butter, and buttermilk were important parts of the Basseri diet, however the most important sources of calories and nutrients were agricultural. Primarily flour, sugar, and tea but also fruits and vegetables, especially dates, are acquired by trade for secondary products of pastoralism. "In return, the products brought to market are almost exclusively clarified butter, wool, lambskins, and occasional live stock" (1961: 9-10). In the decade or so before Barth's study, some Basseri began taking up agricultural practices themselves, although he noted "it is done with some distaste" (1961: 9). Still other Basseri owned plots of agricultural land along their migration routes, which they rented out, taking a share of the agricultural product (ibid).

Compared to the Baluch of the Sarhad in the 1970s, Basseri households of the late 1950s tended to keep larger flocks and to have a higher ideal and real threshold herd size necessary to keep a family financially secure and independent. Barth reported,

Among the Basseri today each household has about 6-12 donkeys and on an average somewhat less than 100 adult sheep and goats... The average suggested above of somewhat less than 100 sheep/goats per tent is based on Basseri estimates and agreed with a few rough counts that I made of the flock associated with tent camps. Only very few herd owners have more than 200 sheep, while informants agreed that it was impossible to subsist on less than 60. To maintain a satisfactory style of life it was generally considered that a man with normal family commitments requires about 100 sheep and goats — so at present a majority of the Basseri fall somewhat short of this idea. However, the flocks in 1958 were still suffering from losses experienced during and after a very bad season in 1956-7, and were thus unusually small.

Barth 1961: 13, 16-17

Some families additionally owned real estate, as mentioned above, or had saved money in a bank. The majority of families, however, owning only their domestic chattel and their herd, had to make a living from the production of secondary products and, when necessary and available, wage labor from herding or agricultural work (1961: 20). By comparison with the Sarhadi Baluch, then, the Basseri were clearly more dependent upon trade to meet subsistence requirements, having a much greater focus upon a single subsistence resource, that of pastoral production. As a result of this focus, the Basseri tended to keep larger herds than the Sarhadi Baluch.

Like the Sarhadi Baluch, though, Basseri households were composed normally of nuclear families, which were the basic “units of production and consumption; represented by their male head they hold rights over all movable property including flocks; and they can even on occasion act as independent units for political purposes” (1961: 11).

Households were also organized into camp groups, normally between two and five tents, for the sake of forming larger herding units. “These combine their flocks and entrust them to a single shepherd, and co-operate during milking time. As noted, a shepherd is readily able to control a herd of up to 400 head, and there is some feeling that very small herds are relatively more troublesome...” (1961: 22). Camp groups were formed by

contract between member households and a shepherd. All households within an *oulad*—a territorial and paternal unit, discussed below—were free to associate with any other member household and were also free to leave camp groups whenever they chose (1961: 22-23). Like the Sarhadi Baluch, Basseri camp groups were not composed exclusively of agnatically related households, though there did sometimes tend to be an agnatic core at the heart of camp groups (1961: 39). Instead, “the composition of herding units thus seems to be determined by considerations of the availability of labour, the sizes of herds, and the distribution of friendship and mutual trust” (1961: 23). The composition of camp groups, thus “reflects practical expediency for herding purposes, rather than kinship or other basic principles of organization” (ibid).

The political organization of the Basseri differed in subtle yet important ways from the Sarhadi Baluch. In general outline it is largely comparable. The Basseri ‘tribe’ or *il* was divided into twelve separate large descent groups, *tira*. These *tira* were then often, though not always, subdivided further into a structurally smaller unit, the *oulad*. The basic units composing each *oulad* were the tents, *khune*, or independent households—the most basic economic and political units of Basseri society. All of these divisions, except sometimes those between *tira*, which may be unrelated<sup>113</sup>, were made on the basis of patrilineal connections (1961: 53). Each *oulad*, or each *tira* when not otherwise subdivided into *oulads*, enjoyed exclusive rights of access to a particular territory for pasturage, camping, and access to water (1961: 56). In general outlines, then, except for the inclusion of unrelated groups into the Basseri structure, this is a system that is comparable with that of the Yomut Turkmen: membership in a patrilineal

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<sup>113</sup> The Basseri ‘tribe’ is in fact composed of some units of completely foreign ethnic and genetic origin (1961: 52), a fact which will be discussed more in the following section.

group conferred rights of access to a commonly owned territory and all naturally occurring resources in that territory.

At the level of the camp group, though, fundamental differences between the Sarhadi Baluch and the Basseri are clearly manifested. Barth noted that, on the inter-household level of interaction within an *oulad*, “the importance of agnatic kin is reinforced by an ideology of respect and deference for [Father], [Father’s Father], and [Father’s Brother], and solidarity of [Brothers], and the ideal of solidarity is extended laterally to patrilineal cousins and beyond” (1961: 30). Despite that general sentiment, however, “the strength of lateral solidarity is slight and may even be too weak to keep brothers together. More frequently it seems that references to agnatic kinship are used as formal justification... for the influence that accrues to leaders by virtue of other factors” (ibid). In fact, Barth stated that bonds of economic and political solidarity between matrikin can be as strong as between patrikin, and, most interestingly, he stated, too, that “*affinal* relations are also regarded as relations of solidarity and kinship; and they appear to be most effective in establishing political bonds between tents,” (1961: 32, original emphasis). Barth attempted to explain the contradiction by arguing that, in Basseri camps,

the strongly bilateral authority distribution that characterized the domestic domain and relations between close relatives can be extended to the political sphere within the camp without coming into conflict with an explicit patrilineal ideology, or with the principle of patriliney as applied in the higher echelons of the tribal organization.

Barth 1961: 41

This is due to the fact that, among the Basseri, “matrilateral and affinal kinsmen in camp are for the most part also patri-kinsmen, and identification and solidarity that derives from the former relationship may, when necessary, also be justified by the latter” (ibid).

Nevertheless, the patrilineal principle of political segmentation and balanced opposition was routinely violated among the Basseri, regardless of any reflective justification in terms of segmentary lineage structures. Instead,

the segmentation implicit in the patrilineal framework is thus blurred by the importance of ties to matrikin and affines, and the camp emerges as a basically unsegmented group. This does not mean that the camp is not at any one time divided into various kinds of sub-groups. But such sub-groups are impermanent, and either without clear boundaries, such as the spheres of influence of prominent men, or they are clearly associated with a specific and limited activity, such as herding. They thus do not constitute segments in any more general a sociological sense.

Barth 1961: 41-42

Political connections between households, then, seem to have existed to some degree as a result of paternal descent, and only in the case where a living father still influenced the economic and political decisions, including the formation of marriage alliances, of his offspring and perhaps his offspring's offspring (cf. 1961: 32-34).

Political advantages resulted from the existence of many able-bodied sons, which expanded the family labor base and would be also a valuable economic resource to other families in the camp. In other words, political power resulted from economic power, especially in the form of labor. This is most clearly demonstrated by the case of

'individual No. 1' in the camp where Barth spent most of his time. Individual No. 1 had been the unofficial headman of his camp, but

without a resident son, he relies on the sons of his herding unit partner No. 2 as shepherds... This places him in a position of immediate dependence on No. 2, which continually embarrasses him in his role as camp leader. More importantly his wider ties within the camp are critically weakened, and in the period of my fieldwork he experienced one defection from the camp, by No. 5, and several tests of strength with No. 10...

Barth 1961: 36



According to Barth's figure 10, individual No. 2 enjoyed the support of four sons, two of which still lived in his tent, while troublesome individual No. 10 had the same number, one of which still lived in his tent. A further source of trouble between the two families probably resulted from the fact that they were not connected by close affinal ties (1961: 37 and figure 10).

Although Barth continually stressed the importance of all kinship connections—maternal, paternal, and affinal—in determining the relative political power and social position of member households within a camping group, it is clear from his description that affinal relationships are predominantly important and that political power derives not only by consensus of other member households, but also in large part as a result of the number of offspring flowing from a tent, which may then be used to arrange politically and economically beneficial alliances between households. This is clear when Barth cites the Basseri's own description of how a leader can stay in the political vanguard of a camp group:

‘A man's influence depends not on what he has here (pointing to his head) but on what he has here (pointing to the genitalia)!’ Married sons and daughters spread his influence through the camp, and these and other kinsmen and affines form the web through which he may seek to dominate.

Barth 1961: 44

The stress on the importance of other kinsmen, not directly related as ascendants, and possibly brothers—though Barth noted that there is no necessary economic or political association between them (1961: 22-23)—is not supported in the above citation. Only children seem to be important to the Basseri in the above formulation.

Thus the Basseri, as studied by Barth in the late 1950s, were not a segmentary lineage society, in the sense that unilineal principles of political solidarity were not

respected to the exclusion of others. They otherwise appear uncannily similar to both the Yomut Turkmen and the Sarhadi Baluch in their other economic and organizational features, except in their single-resource focus and the singly important economic role that herd maintenance played in the economic well-being of households in that society.

What, then, accounts for the disjuncture between the patrilineal political principle in operation at the structural level at and above that of the *oulad*, and the apparent mere lip-service that it was given by the Basseri at the level of day-to-day political action between households within an *oulad*? This question concerned Barth greatly and he struggled to account for it in terms of how existing, growing *oulads* could separate into two or more new *oulads* with a distinction made on a patrilineal basis, even when their internal political divisions were primarily organized on the basis of affinity, and, given enough time, were liable to change completely and independently of their previous history. That such a patrilineal segmentation must have taken place in the past seemed clear to him, owing to the patrilineal distinction between the *oulads* contemporary to his study.

Barth's complex argument suffers fatally, though, from his attempt to treat the sociopolitical system of the Basseri as structurally static. The nature of Basseri actions and institutions can instead be resolved with an appreciation of the changing historical conditions to which the Basseri were subject in the decades immediately prior to Barth's fieldwork, the benefit of expanded ethnographic work on similar tribal and post-segmentary lineage societies since the publication of *Nomads of South Persia*, and an appreciation for the role of structuration in culture change.

Despite the mixed and unsegmented nature of Basseri organization below the *oulad* level, Barth maintained that "a closer investigation of some of the implication of

the processes of camp formation does... reveal a trend towards the gradual crystallization of patrilineal descent cores in mature camps” (1961: 62). In the course of his argument, Barth identified three factors which he felt to be instrumental in that process. First, “a cumulative trend” (1961: 65) affecting marriage choices. Second, mobility inside and outside of the camp. Third, “a certain frequency of camp exogamy, which implies a greater mobility of women than men” (ibid). Together, argued Barth, these have the effect of concentrating patrilineal kin within the same camps. Each of these factors will be dealt with in turn. This close reading of Barth’s hypothesis is necessary to demonstrate the link between mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems proposed in this chapter.

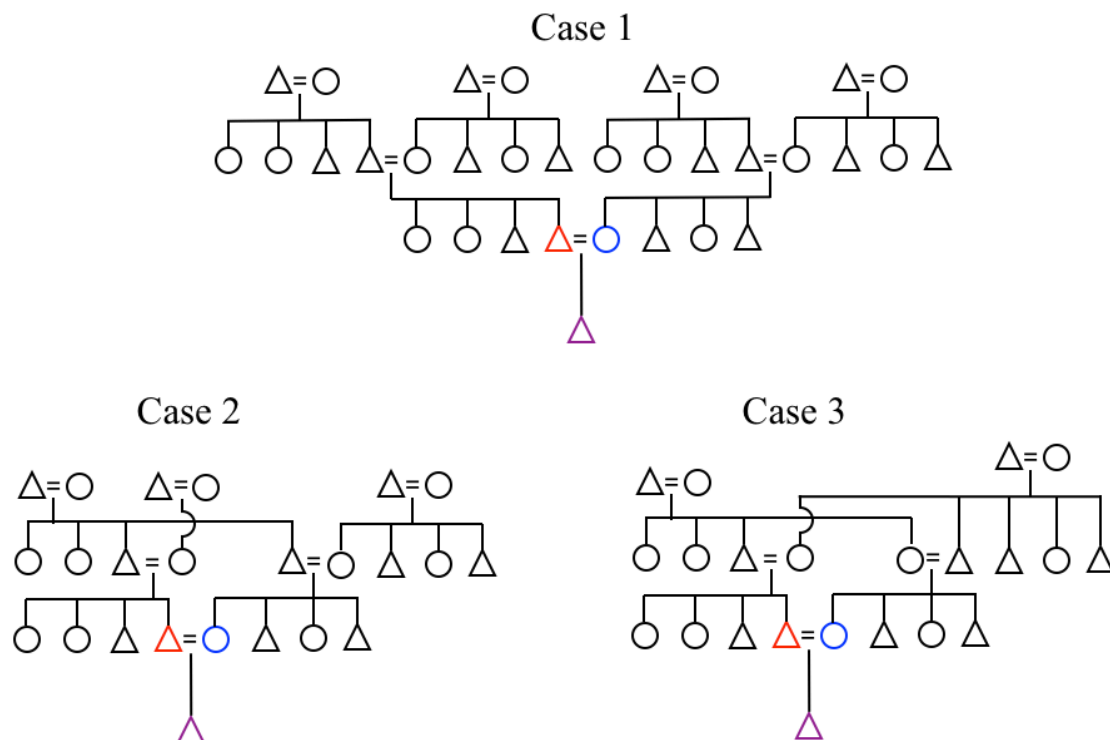
First, Barth contended that “since residence is conventionally patrilocal, a majority of extra-camp marriages imply mobility of the woman and not of the man. As a result, a higher proportion of a camp member’s patrilineal than matrilineal kinsmen will tend to be present in his camp” (ibid). According to the figures Barth provided earlier (1961: 35), 66 % of marriages take place within the camp. This would eventually produce a pattern that favors the presence of patrilineal kin, as Barth suggested, but it would affect all patrilineages in a camp equally, and in small populations would be largely dependent upon the birth and survival rates of male versus female offspring. Barth went on to state that

marriages are directed towards close kinsmen in preference to others, giving a 30% frequency of cousin marriage. Since there is no normative preference for patrikin, this factor alone produces no trend, but favours all kinsfolk within the camp equally. But as a result of the factor noted above, there tends to be a higher proportion of patrikin, and especially agnates, present... As a result, there is a statistical trend towards the maintenance of close kinship connections with agnates as against other kinsmen...

Barth 1961: 65

In fact, according to the figures provided (1961: 35), marriages between agnatic cousins were the least common, composing less than 7% of all marriages. Marriage with other cousins were roughly three times more common at 22%. Marriage between non-relatives was much more common at 71%. Even given the possible higher rate of agnatic presence within a camp, marriage preferences were clearly for non-agnates. It is not hard to determine why this would be case. If, among the Basseri, the over-riding strategy of marriages is to create affinal alliances in order to maximize economic opportunities, and, as a result, political power, such a pattern would make absolute sense. The children of close-kin marriage, especially close patrikin, would be super-related to their parents kin, but even more distantly related to others in camp. There are obvious reasons to avoid this in the Basseri camp group. Children served as potential economic and political bridges between households and herding groups. Fathers and grandfathers making marriage arrangements might not need to shore up agnatic relations, especially among their current descendants or with brothers who were members of their herding unit, and with whom relations were otherwise good. Second, these relations might be no more or less economically or politically important than any others at any given moment. The interest that these non-related parties to the marriage share, then, is not the wife, as Barth stated (1961: 34-35), but the children, especially sons and sons-in-law, as shared sources of labor. This idea can be most easily communicated in figure 3.2, below.

In case 1, the purple individual, the child of the red and blue individuals, has a connection to four different sets of grandparents, and by implication then, equally to all of their children and grandchildren. That child is the product of a marriage of two completely unrelated individuals, at least in terms of the last two generations. In case 2,



**Figure 3.2. Political Potential of Basseri Marriages**

the purple individual has only three sets of grandparents and, therefore, all other things being equal, makes only 75% of the connections made in case 1. In this instance Purple's father and mother are related to one another in that Red's father and Blue's father are brothers. The parents of these two brothers, then, serve as double grand parents. This may serve to intensify the connection with the other children and grandchildren of these two double grandparents if necessary, but it does so at the expense of expanding connections further throughout the group. The example in case 3 is the further extension of this principle, where Purple is the child of two children from two sibling pairs. In this instance, Red's father is Blue's mother's brother, and his mother is his wife's father's sister. Again, relations with these two families are intensified for Purple, and presumably

his parents and grandparents, at the expense of a wider extent in the community.<sup>114</sup>

Clearly, marriage alliance decisions in Basseri camp groups were associated with a complicated sociopolitical and economic context and a number of considerations beyond simply the maximal expansion of affinal and kinship connections would have been important in determining patterns of marriage alliance.

Finally, attempting to account for *oulad*-ization and the paternal core of camp groups and *oulads*, Barth pointed out that small sibling groups are more likely to sedentarize and drop out of the mobile pastoral camp group, and that there is therefore a tendency for camps “to break up into less closely related, inbreeding divisions — each... a potential independent camp with a consistent bias towards the formation of an agnatic core” (1961: 66). Thus, “rapid growth and fission of genealogically compound camps should... produce new camps of markedly increased homogeneity” (ibid).<sup>115</sup> In fact, the phenomenon of families dropping out of the pastoral way of life probably has more to do with the fact that families with small numbers of sons are at an economic and political disadvantage relative to other households, and so are more likely to be unable to maintain a mobile, pastoral way of life, independent of their agnatic associations.

Barth’s argument for how agnatically defined *oulads* can split off to form new divisions based on the patrilineal principle of division is unsatisfying. His argument cannot explain how agnatic units can come to form the core political unit of a camp group, given the unimportance of agnatic connections outside the third generation as demonstrated by marriage preferences statistics that he provided elsewhere. Instead, the

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<sup>114</sup> These cases are only ideal and meant to illustrate the principle under discussion here.

<sup>115</sup> The previous observation is otherwise impossible to integrate with this one, following the marriage figures that Barth provided earlier, which indicate that 83.3% of marriages are made across the patrilineal boundary (1961: 35). This observation would suggest that such gaps in camp groups would be potentially fertile ground for marriage alliances.

presence of agnatic cores in camp groups and *oulads*, the difficulty that some larger *oulads* have in splitting up in any coherent way at the time of Barth's study (cf. 1961: 64), and the violation of the patrilineal principle in day-to-day political action while it is conserved at the *oulad* level and above, is much more likely a result of historical changes that altered the material and political context of the once-segmentary lineage Basseri system. Unfortunately, as Barth noted in his introductory chapter, there is very little historical information regarding the Basseri prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, AD. It is known that the Basseri, like the Yomut, were once targets of Reza Shah's campaign of forced sedentarization in the 1930s. During that time, most Basseri were sedentary and were only able to take up the mobile pastoral way of life again upon his abdication in 1941 (1961: 3). Thus, at the time of Barth's study, most Basseri had only been mobile for the last sixteen to seventeen years. For the same amount of time prior to that, they had been forcibly sedentarized. Most of the middle-aged Basseri that Barth would have encountered might have never known or only barely remembered the mobile pastoral lifestyles of their parents and grandparents.

The decade and a half of forced sedentarization and the possible institutional changes that resulted from it, and the increasing power of the sedentary government to intercede directly in the lives of the Basseri—as demonstrated in its most ultimate expression, sedentarization—likely had two effects on the Basseri, probably related, and possibly one resulting from the other. First, it is entirely possible that during the fifteen years of forced sedentarization, the institutional stress upon patrilineages was overcome, in practice, by other factors relating to propinquity. In other words, if conditions were right, the amount of disjuncture between the segmentary lineage system and settled life

may have led to the effective end of those practices, even if those principles lived on discursively through the time of Barth's study. Second, either following as a result of that change, or leading to it, the economic focus of the Basseri may have been geared towards interaction with a growing and more widely accessible sedentary market for secondary products at the same time that other sources of subsistence were made unavailable, either through the growth of sedentary populations or the disappearance of other naturally occurring resources. This could have put greater strain upon the Basseri to increase their level of pastoral production and encouraged the union of political and economic alliances, either leading to, furthering, or being made easier by, the erosion of the patrilineal principle of segmentation. Present historical sources unfortunately do not allow for the positive affirmation of this hypothesis, but it is interesting to note nonetheless that the pattern of disjuncture between the operation of the patrilineal principle at the level of the Basseri *oulad*, and its discursive existence despite its effective nonexistence is precisely the pattern of cultural change expected in the Giddensian model of structuration. Changes in day-to-day political action eventually undermine the lowest structural levels. This structural friction eventually works its way up into institutions which are more abstract and more removed from day-to-day activities.

Another important source of the institutional changes that drove the Basseri away from their segmentary lineage system is surely their relationship with the Iranian state. Reza Shah's forced settlement program has already been mentioned, and touched also upon the Yomut Turkmen, though it seems to have been more successful among the Basseri. In addition, Iranian attempts to govern the Basseri, at the time of Barth's study, led to interesting bureaucratic developments. The full implications of the co-option of



the person of the Basseri chief, state sponsorship of his position, and the use and possibility of using coercive military and economic power to control and manipulate the Basseri, and its comparison to the Baluch, will form the topic of the next section.

### *Conclusion*

The comparison between the Sarhadi Baluch and the Basseri of Fars Province suggests that Salzman's distinction between specialized and multi-resource pastoral societies (e.g. 1971) is not easily dismissible (e.g. Khazanov 1984: 78). Contra Khazanov, a relatively high degree of autarky can characterize a mobile, pastoral society to the extent that the society extensifies production not through increasing pastoral production, but rather through a broadening of its subsistence base. Furthermore, it is here proposed that the degree of autarky in such a society is highly consequential to its sociopolitical form. Specifically, it is suggested that there is a dependent relationship between autarky and political autonomy, and that this autonomy is associated with the operation of segmentary lineage structures, institutions, and structuring principles. In the case of the Basseri, this structure was somehow compromised, whether that compromise led to, or was the result of a single resource focus. Thus, the second of the three primary correlates with tribalism are two related sociopolitical factors. They are the degree of autarky and the breadth of resource focus, both of which are highly relevant to political independence. Unfortunately, this point cannot be proven here. Instead, it is enough to demonstrate the correlation through appeal to the two case studies above. Precisely why this correlation should be the case, however, will be demonstrated in the following section.

The assumptions that lay behind Khazanov's opinion that mobile pastoralists are *a priori* dependent upon the products of a sedentary civilization were based mostly on the study of those mobile pastoral societies that were the most specialized and most in contact with sedentary societies for long stretches of time and, hence, more likely to be culturally, socially, and economically dependent upon them in the first place. This, along with an unawareness of the segmentary lineage system and its nature, served to obscure the connection between multi-resource mobile pastoral economies, specifically, and the sociopolitical structure of segmentary lineage systems. As Salzman has pointed out, there is a contingent relationship between segmentary lineage systems and a multi-resource focus, such that autonomy among pastoralists, in cases such as the Sarhadi Baluch, supplied if not by autarky then at least by politically neutral economic exchanges, correlates with segmentary lineage structures, whereas economic and political subjugation, which tend to go hand in hand, characterize a state of peasant pastoralism where these structures have broken down and a post-segmentary lineage society is characterized by complete subjugation to the political will of the state (1996b).

Despite the significance of a multi-resource focus for the maintenance of a segmentary lineage system, it is nonetheless clear that these societies demonstrate a special affinity for pastoral production strategies. The reasons for this are by now obvious. Segmentary lineage economies involve the privatization of ownership of the means of production, with the concomitant communal ownership of naturally occurring resources, which serves to provide a profit motive, encourages the mixing of individual units of production, but nevertheless protects group material interests on a moral-political level. Understanding these economic systems serves as a basis for the investigation of

political structures of segmentary lineage societies. The question of relationships of political hierarchy in and between segmentary lineage societies and external polities has been avoided in this section. Aspects of both the Sarhadi Baluch and Basseri sociopolitical systems dealing with political offices and institutions have also been avoided, though they are to a large extent relevant to the issues that had been discussed. This topic will form the focus of the next, penultimate section of this chapter, which will serve to integrate this issues with the analysis that has already been provided.

### **Segmentary Lineage Systems and Political Inequality, or “The Chief Problem”**

Having established the correlation of segmentary lineage structures and structuring principles with mobility, pastoralism, and a broad economic base, it remains to explore the phenomenon of ‘chiefs’. Many mobile pastoral societies possess an individual member who has been labeled a chief by historians and ethnographers alike. In this section it will be demonstrated that the there is a great deal of commonality in the functions these individuals perform, and just as much variability in how they carry out those functions, structurally. There are chiefs who sit atop a hierarchical political structure, and can rule with coercive power, and there are also those that sit at the center of a political network, but who do not have access to means of physical coercion. These individuals can be described as falling along a continuum from political ruler, on the hierarchical end of the scale, to leader, on the egalitarian end. It will be further demonstrated that the forms of chief near the latter end of the scale correlate with segmentary lineage societies. This constitutes the third and final major cultural correlate of segmentary lineage systems. The reasons for this correlation are not complex, but

depend upon a number of factors deriving from economic and political conditions, both inside and outside the system, especially relations with external polities. These factors will be explored below and their associations with segmentary lineage systems will be demonstrated through further exploration of the different qualities of chiefly office among both the Sarhadi Baluch and the Basseri of Fars Province.

It has been pointed out above that one of the attributes sometimes assumed by Near Eastern scholars to correlate with 'tribalism', when it is defined as the political aspect of mobile pastoralism, is some degree of egalitarianism or at least heterarchy, especially in distinction to the state, which is generally considered to be more often inequalitarian and more strongly hierarchical (e.g. Cooper 2006). The opinion of many contemporary ethnographers is different and tends to stress relationships of inequality and exploitation within segmentary lineage societies (cf. Salzman 1999). This opinion is influenced by two different factors. First, the replacement of Evans-Pritchard's segmentary lineage model among the Nuer, which stressed egalitarianism and political equality, with a Marxist model that stresses exploitation and material and political inequality (cf. Salzman 2000) and, second, the conflation of mobile pastoral 'tribal' societies with sedentary societies that possess, obviously, a very broad range of political formations (e.g. Khazanov 1984).

The question, of course, is not whether at any given moment there is some degree of wealth inequality between members of a segmentary lineage system. There clearly is. The important question is a structural one. To what degree are economic relations between these members exploitative and to what degree are they founded on an ideological justification? Is it to the extent that they create class distinctions and lead to

generational differences in wealth equality, which, on an institutional time scale, would eventually lead to the development of political stratification? The answer is that, among segmentary lineage societies, material inequality does not translate to political inequality. The reasons for this are many, and are the result of the process of structuration—day-to-day activities of pastoral production reinforce structural properties of segmentary lineage systems, which again inform day-to-day activities. Given this reifying nature of action and structure, it is in some sense arbitrary which part of the process is analyzed first. Here, I will treat the economic actions of a segmentary lineage society, and then demonstrate how those actions reify structures that preclude the development of institutionalized political hierarchy.

The economies of segmentary lineage systems, considered in isolation, preclude the possibility of the development or existence of institutionalized relations of political hierarchy because they lack any long-term basis for wealth inequality. Livestock, for instance, function both as capital and the means of production, and in traditional pastoral societies are highly volatile forms of wealth. Take, for example, the Sarhadi Baluch. Herds of sheep and goat on the Sarhad were limited in their possible size and scope by three different primary factors. First, by the availability of water and pasture, which usually limited herd size to between 200 and 300 animals, usually belonging to a number of households constituting a camping group (Salzman 2000: 203), second, by the cold winters during which animals sometimes had to be fed specially prepared fodder by hand, and, finally, by the periodic drought years on the Sarhad, which could have the effect of halving herd sizes from one year to the next (2000: 96). This all had the effect of making livestock production a particularly volatile enterprise on the Sarhad. Year-to-year

volatility is also noted among the Yomut Turkmen (Irons 1975: 156-57). A study of wealth inequality between generations, undertaken between 1973 and 1974 (Irons 1980) showed that, among the Yomut,

...the actual amount of change is about 75 percent of what would be expected if patrimony rank and current wealth rank were randomly related. This, it would seem, is enough to justify the view the Yomut have of their society: the wealthy will not remain wealthy, nor will the poor remain poor.

Irons 1994: 192

In other words, the wealth of a man's offspring over the course of their lives is only one quarter determined by the inheritance they receive from their father. This, Irons demonstrated, precluded the development of socioeconomic classes in that society (ibid).

For this to be true of segmentary lineage societies, it is not only the pastoral aspect that must preclude the development and maintenance of wealth inequality over generations, but all avenues of economic pursuit and potential sources of capital.

Similarly, then, among the Sarhadi Baluch date production had its own limitations. Like the herds on the Sarhad, date crops in Mashkil varied widely during the period of Salzman's study, declining by as much as 50% between 1971 and 1972. These bad conditions were even anticipated by some Baluch who skipped expending resources and energy on their harvesting trip to the Mashkil region, altogether (Salzman 2000: 120).

Theoretically each individual household could plant as many date palms as it wished. In practice, though, labor was an important limiting factor in the investment of new date palms. Harvesting the dates took no small amount of time or effort and if new date palms were to be planted, then a household would need adequate labor reserves upon which to draw in the expansion. Competing for leftover labor, also, were families who had more dates than they could harvest and were willing to pay a share of their harvest to anyone

who assisted them (ibid). Richness in date palms, then, also did not translate to long-term economic stratification. Likewise, the practice of wage labor seems to have been geared towards subsistence and aimed at trade for the acquisition of agricultural products. Raiding, like the wage labor practices which replaced it after the 1930s, was an economic pursuit open equally to all adult Sarhadi Baluch men and in itself could not have served as any special means of long-term economic inequality and would also have been subject to its own fluctuations (2000: 309). To some extent, the preservation of segmentary lineage structures among the Sarhadi Baluch had to do with the Iranian state's strategy of indirect rule, but the long-term, institutional stability of the segmentary lineage system, on an economic level, lay in the fact that none of their traditional economic pursuits provided for the long-term accumulation of wealth, which could have led to long-term economic differentiation and, ultimately, potential bases of economic power that could have then served as foundations for differential political power that would have distorted the segmentary lineage system by changing sociopolitical actions and, eventually, the underlying structures (ibid).

I maintain here that this lack of economic disparity plays a fundamental role in the maintenance of segmentary lineage systems in a society. The lack of long-term economic disparity serves to keep segments in the system relatively balanced. While short-term differences in access to capital and productive resources could conceivably lead to some amount of political coercion and practical inequality between households, each is nevertheless free to pursue its own subsistence however it sees fit, without any moral obligation owing to that disparity, or according from it. In other words, though economic inequalities in the short term may manifest in political inequality at any given moment,

there is no institutionalization of this inequality, rather there is a moral value placed upon political equality and individual independence. This value is manifested in the principle of balanced opposition. Were a means of long-term preservation of capital to present itself to a society, and be adopted, there would then obtain a situation of institutional friction that could eventually lead to structural changes and the naturalization of political inequality—i.e. the eclipse of agnatic structuring principles of a segmentary lineage system.

For an example of this naturalization of political inequality, it is profitable to return again to a discussion of the differences in the way the chiefly office operates among the Sarhadi Baluch and the Basseri.

#### *Hierarchy among The Sarhadi Baluch and the Basseri of Fars Province*

Among the Sarhadi Baluch, each ‘tribe’ was defined by its division into patrilineal segments and its ultimate political unity against outside forces on the basis of that common descent, as already described. Each of these tribes also had a *sardar*, or ‘chief’ who was a political focus of the polity. He was the political leader and external representative of the tribe. The position and role of the *sardar* can be understood by comparison with its structural analog from a lower segmentary level, the *halki master*, or camp leader. Salzman noted that among the Sarhadi Baluch, *master* is a word which can be used both as a noun and adjective, meaning seniority, and was a relative value.

One was *master*, senior or a senior only in relation to junior or a junior. An eldest brother was *master* to a middle brother, who was in turn *master* to a youngest brother. Various degrees of deference and obedience, depending on the roles involved, were directed toward the *master*.

Salzman 2000: 298



The concept of *master* also encompassed the idea of political seniority, though notably not political *authority*. In a Basseri camp group, or *halk*, there was always one individual who fulfilled the role of *master*. This determination was not made simply on the basis of age alone, but had to do with the dominant camp lineage, economic success, eloquence in speaking, a household with a large labor pool, and especially an ability to bring about the sorts of day-to-day compromises necessary for the functioning of camp group life. A *halki master* had to be perceived as being fair, unbiased, and representative of the interests of the camp group (2000: 299). But, as Salzman took pains to note, the *halki master* was a leader, not a ruler.

...the master was able to lead because he ‘decided’ to go where his campmates wished to go. His final decisions... were based upon extended consultation with the other household heads... If no consensus was forthcoming, the wise headman put off the decision. If no consensus was forthcoming but a decision could not be put off, the skilled headman would squeeze out a solid majority opinion. He really could do nothing else, for if he tried to lead the *halk* in a direction that it did not wish to go, he found himself abandoned, a general without an army.

Salzman 2000: 300

The *halki master*, then, in large part was beholden to the group, and led only by the will of his camp mates. At any time, a camp group could split up on account of disagreements, generally stemming from divided economic interests. It was this sort of outcome that the *halki master* worked to avoid. This limit on the power of the *halki master* was in one sense structural. As noted above, each household was free to associate at its will, and move as it willed within the tribal territory. Camp groups tended to coagulate, nevertheless, as a result of mutual interests in combining labor pools for herding and security. The material limits of the *master*’s power, on the level of day-to-day interactions, were grounded in the fact that there was little to no coercive power available to the *master*, neither physical nor economic. “The authority of the *halki*

*master* thus rested most heavily upon the fact that he represented, in a very concrete and case-by-case fashion, the collective opinion of the camp” (ibid).

The role of the *sardar* is comparable in large measure to that of the *halki master*, extrapolated to the widest, ‘tribal’ level, encapsulating all lineages united into a single polity on the basis of an agnatic principle.

The Sardar was a leader, not a ruler. The tribesmen were supporters, not subject. The principles of hierarchy and centralization represented by the Sardarship were in practice highly qualified and restricted... It was by acting on behalf of public opinion that the Sardar was able to lead effectively.

Salzman 2000: 301

Like the *halki master*, two of the most essential services that the *sardar* supplied were mediation and reconciliation, though on the widest level this entailed not households but rather whole lineage segments. Like the *halki master*, one did not simply inherit the office of *sardar*. Though the office was normally passed down through the patriline, “pragmatic consideration of age, seniority and status of mother, and ability” were also taken into consideration (2000: 303). Thus, “Brothers, sons, and sons of brothers of the previous Sardar, and even sons-in-law were possibilities from which candidates had to assert themselves or be chosen” (ibid). The selection process for a new *sardar* was ultimately democratic, in the sense that it did not even depend upon a vote of tribal constituents. Instead, several would-be *sardars* from the appropriate set of candidates could begin to act as *sardar*, eventually only one of them being legitimized by the consensus and mutual respect of his tribesmen. This decision was ultimately based upon effective leadership (ibid). Like the *halki master*, a *sardar* who found his decisions unpopular would face a mutiny of his fellow tribesmen, over whom he held no coercive power other than his own diplomatic influence. He had no police force or army and thus

could not resort to physical force for coercion, he could not deny the right of access to pasture and water resources within the territory of the segmentary lineage society, a right which was given to all members by virtue of their patrilineage. Nor did he have an economic advantage that could place him in the role of patron to clients (2000: 308).

As the leader of independent tribesmen, the Sardar stood for a represented the tribe, but was largely the servant of the tribe. Most levels of tribal life were in the hands of lower-level groups or individuals... which left little of policy or administration in the hands of the Sardar.

Salzman 2000: 307

The office of the *sardar*, then, was highly limited, both in terms of the day-to-day material reality of life among the Sarhadi Baluch, and, in its segmentary lineage structure, two phenomena which are, of course, fundamentally related and reifying. The position of any man as *sardar* of his tribe ultimately rested on his ability to represent and serve the best interests of his tribesmen. In the politically egalitarian climate of the Sarhadi Baluch, an unpopular leader was soon no leader at all. "A leader whose followers refused to follow was no longer a leader, and so, even in this area, which was especially the realm of the chief, the Sardar had to be highly sensitive to public opinion, to the preferences of and constraints upon his tribesmen" (2000: 306).

The institution of chiefship among the Sarhadi Baluch may be compared with its structural counterpart among the Basseri. Like the Baluch, the Basseri, too, had politically senior camp leaders. The position of these individuals and its contingency upon affinal alliances and the availability of household labor has been discussed above. These individuals functioned in much the same way as the *halki masters* of the Sarhadi Baluch. It was incumbent upon them to facilitate the sorts of compromise necessary to keep a camp group together and running smoothly (Barth 1961: 26-27). These

individuals, Barth claimed, had no coercive means by which to implement their political will and so, like the *halki master* and *sardar*, above, they were leaders rather than rulers, and as such they could be deposed at any time by the collective will and actions of the camp group members (1961: 27). Though this does seem to have been largely the case, in fact Barth's own description of inter-camp politics, as discussed above, suggests that in fact the political power available to a family, though not institutionalized, derived from economic power in the form of herding labor from sons.

At the wider, 'tribal' level, however, the political powers of the Basseri chief were greatly expanded. The chief was not simply a leader, but was, in fact, a ruler, one who Barth described as an autocrat (1961: 72). The Basseri chief sat atop a kind of segmentary, hierarchical organization. Each constituent *oulad* was organized under a headman who answered to the chief and conveyed to his fellow *oulad* members the will of the chief (1961: 27). These headmen, however, conveyed authority only as it was passed down to them from the chief and otherwise possessed no ideological basis of power by virtue of their own office. Thus, all political authority remained monopolized by the chief (1961: 75-76). The Basseri chief's political power in day-to-day Basseri society derived most clearly in Barth's analysis from structural sources:

The outstanding feature of the chief's position, however, is his power of decision and autocratic command over his subjects... The right to command... is a strictly chiefly prerogative. The monopolization by the chief of the right to command is a fundamental abstract principle of Basseri social structure. This idea was clearly expressed by informants... the tribe without its chief was compared to a flock without its shepherd and a car without its driver.

Barth 1961: 74-75

In other words, the Basseri accepted in principle the autocratic power of the chief. This differs greatly from relations of political seniority at the level of the camp group and

*oulad*, and with both the camp group and tribal level of the Sarhadi Baluch. The Basseri chief's authority was, then, naturalized and institutionalized—it was a structural given underlying day-to-day Basseri life. This is another feature of Basseri society at the time of Barth's study that contradicts segmentary lineage structuring principles.

In addition to his autocratic power, the Basseri chief occupied a special place in the segmentary structure of Basseri society. This position conveyed special rights and privileges. For instance, while the members of individual *oulads* were restricted to the pasturage resources allocated by the chief to those *oulads*, the chief and his family were free to access all Basseri resources (1961: 74). The chief also had a special segment of the society, called the Darbar, which traveled with him, and constituted a kind of core of special officers (1961: 76). In this way, the ruling segment of the Basseri was elevated above the egalitarian plane to which other member segments belonged, and sat as a legally and politically more privileged class—in fact a ruling class.

The material conditions and precise nature of the Basseri chief's power are not made entirely clear in Barth's analysis. It is clear that the chief possessed physically coercive means with which to pursue his political will over that of his constituents, if necessary:

Corporal punishment takes place in the presence of the chief and is specified by him — usually in the form of a certain number of strokes with a stout pole. Such punishment is painful and in more severe cases dangerous. The beating is not performed by any special category of functionary — any bystander who is a member of the tribe may be ordered to do it.

Barth 1961: 82

Additionally, as a form of collective punishment the Basseri chief had the power to levy a fine, and he also reportedly had the power to impose an arbitrary tax in heads of livestock at any time and collected an annual tax in clarified butter (1961: 82, 74).<sup>116</sup>

Barth's own explanation of the concentration of such comparatively autocratic powers in the hands of the Basseri chief is ultimately purely functional and inadequate, especially in light of the segmentary lineage system of the Sarhadi Baluch. His explanation began with an accounting of why the Basseri need a chief at all. This basically reduces to what Barth called three, and what I shall call four functions performed by the Basseri chief: "allotting pastures and co-ordinating the migrations of the tribe; settling the disputes that are brought to him; and representing the tribe or any of its members in politically important dealings with sedentary authorities" (1961: 76). The last two of these may, in modified form, be found among the roles played by the *sardar* of the Sarhadi Baluch, who Salzman described as having been co-opted after the transition to Iranian state encapsulation in the 1930s from war and raiding party leaders, into the lowest rung on a bureaucratic ladder linking the central state administration with the tribes of the Sarhad (2000: 320), and who had vested interests in ameliorating disputes, especially between lineage segments of significant size in their tribe. These two, then, do not explain the autocratic nature of the Basseri chief, even in functionalist terms. The first two, however, still do not provide any *causation* of the power of the

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<sup>116</sup> The basis of these means of coercion, though, are explained, in Barth's analysis, only relative to the structural foundation of the office of the chief. Clearly, some significant material means must underlay its institutionalized character, or must have done so recently, if the Basseri lost their segmentary lineage system, as seems to be the case.

Basseri chief, and may just easily be a result of the *effect* of his institutionalized power in the first place.<sup>117</sup>

Barth especially stressed that “the chief’s most important function is to represent the tribe in its relations with the Iranian administration, and in conflicts with sedentary communities or persons” (1961: 77). Ultimately, he felt that this is because in a situation of conflict between a mobile Basseri and a sedentary farmer, there is a problem of legal equivalence. Within the Basseri system there are established means for resolving these conflicts, as there are among the sedentarists. The office of the chief among the Basseri, Barth argued, bridges the gap between these two societies (1961: 77-78). For various reasons, the Basseri nomad cannot cease his migration to undertake a potentially lengthy judicial process, and so,

the difference in their modes of life precludes all the activities usually associated with mediation and the settlement of conflicts. Left to their own devices they can only mobilize and fight it out — and the prevalence of fortified villages in Southern Fars bears evidence to the frequency of this resort in the past, and its occasional practice today.

Barth 1961: 79

The chief, however, is a known element to both parties of this plural society and so serves to represent the interests of the mobile pastoralists to the sedentary court system.

Together with the role played by this chief in organizing the routes of migration, and settling internal disputes, Barth feels that this justifies the “strong feeling of respect and dependence among the tribesmen” (1961: 80).

Nevertheless, Barth acknowledged the functional form of his argument thus far and rightly pointed out that

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<sup>117</sup> Barth noted, for instance, that both the re-allotment and re-organization of pastures among the *oulads*, and the re-organization of their migration routes, was a relatively recent practice, having been first performed by the previous *sardar* at the time of his study, presumably only shortly after, or at the time of re-mobilization following the decade and a half period of forced sedentarization (1961: 76).

the persistence of an institution is not exhaustively explained by a demonstration of its usefulness. The position of autocratic authority occupied by the Basseri chief can only be successfully maintained and defended if it is supported by enough coercive power to enforce discipline and suppress opposition from below...

Barth 1961: 80

Barth further admitted that

In these terms, positions of authority can only be stable if the incumbent of such a position is able to mobilize enough force to counter any group that can form within the system to question his authority. The coercive requirements of the chief are thus not directly proportional to the extent of his authority, but depend on the political constitution of his subjects, on the patterns of leadership and organization not directly under his control.

Barth 1961: 80-81

His identification of these sources of coercion, though, rested entirely on systemic bases, and not on the relevant material questions of physical and economic coercion.

The political subjects of the chief are thus organized in small, mutually hostile, and weakly led group, each striving to maintain internal harmony and unanimity without coercive means. These are the only organized groups, and the only kinds of leaders, within the Basseri system which can challenge the chief's authority and with which he must be able to deal.

Bath 1961: 81

In other words, Barth argued that the relative isolation and divisiveness of individual Basseri camps, coupled with the impotent political power of the camp leaders, means that the rise of any internal opposition to the Basseri chief is precluded by definition. The problem with Barth's explanation is that he only addressed the ability of the chief to remain in power within the structural system, i.e. in opposition to another potential chief from elsewhere in the tribe, taking for granted all of the structural baggage of the contemporary office of the chief. It clearly begs the question of how the office of the Basseri chief gained these institutionalized, naturalized functions in the first place. In short, what accounts for the difference between the office of the chief amongst the



Basseri as opposed to the Sarhadi Baluch? The origin for these distinctions, and the structural changes that took place among the Basseri, must lie in material means of coercion, whether those means are strongly represented in the day-to-day activities of the Basseri at the time of Barth's study, or not.

One major difficulty in identifying these sources in Barth's analysis stems from the fact that during the period of his study the office of the Basseri chief was undergoing a kind of bureaucratic, existential crisis. Two years prior to Barth's study, the Iranian Army began to administer the Basseri directly (1961: 26). Barth reported that this change was not accepted by the Basseri, "who continued to act towards the legally deposed chief as if he were formally in office," but it is quite possible that the means by which the office of the chief continued to function could have been substantially altered (1961: 72). Nevertheless, it seems clear that Basseri chiefs occupied positions of privilege within the sedentary Iranian society and the Iranian state, from which they could have drawn upon compelling sources of coercive power.

The chief and his immediate relatives... own lands and take little part in nomadic life. Particularly the chief and his brothers, one of them the former chief, are sophisticated members of the *élite* on a Persian national level; they maintain houses in Shiraz and travel extensively within and outside of Persia. In wealth they are also in a class entirely apart from other Basseri, each owning several villages as well as flocks of many thousand head of sheep and goats.

Barth 1961: 73-74

Unfortunately, Barth's relatively short stay among the Basseri, and possibly the changing nature of the office of the Basseri chief at that time, precluded any observation of the the exercise of the kind of coercive power that might have originally led to the evolution of the Basseri chiefship from an office of leadership to one rulership, with the institutionalization and naturalization of a high degree of autocratic power. Nevertheless,

the possibility that physical means of coercion located within the state were available to the chief is distinct. The Iranian state clearly had an interest in supporting hierarchical power structures amongst mobile pastoral societies within its own borders. For instance, Barth reports that in the Qashqai area, the army administered groups jointly with their chiefs. The removal of the Basseri chiefs, witnessed in its initial and seemingly unsuccessful stages by Barth, may have been inspired by a desire to curtail the power of these individuals on a national level. The Darbar, also, may have served as a sort of police force, a means by which to exercise physical coercion on all the Basseri *oulads*. Furthermore, the possibility of coercion through economic means, though perhaps indirect, is also clear.

What, then, accounts for this difference between the office of the chief between the Basseri and the Baluch? Why did they both have chiefs and why did their spheres of power and influence vary so widely? At one level it resulted from the different structural configurations of these societies. The Baluch, being a segmentary lineage society, ultimately relied upon their patrilineal segments to provide order and structure to their political lives, but were otherwise independent and unencumbered households that were free to enter into their own economic relationships. As Salzman has stated so eloquently in his 'Iron Law of Politics,' any political system has to choose between two of three ideal attributes:

one can have no more than two of the following set: equality, freedom, and peace. That is, specifying more precisely, of *economic* equality, *individual* freedom, and civil peace *no more* than two can exist in one society... That is, you can have no more than two of the three factors, but of course two or even one are not universally present, for some societies and some circumstances offer one or none of equality, freedom, and peace.

Salzman 2004: 21, original emphasis

Societies characterized by segmentary lineage systems, he explained, emphasize equality and freedom, at the expense of peace (ibid). This is a result of the fact that they lack a political hierarchy. Basseri society, on the other hand, can be seen in its structural organization to have compromised a large degree of individual freedom and a certain amount of economic equality, owing to the privileged nature of the chiefly segment, in order to promote peacefulness, as imposed by a ruler, atop a hierarchical political structure, with naturalized, institutionalized powers over individuals in society.

It is certainly the case that the importance, and perhaps the existence, of a chiefly office in any segmentary society is the result of a need propounded by external political pressure. Salzman described the political authority found in the office of the *sardar* as being a product of both centrifugal forces of independence and separation among the segments of the segmentary Sarhadi Baluch system, and the centripetal forces of the Iranian state pushing inwards on their society (2000: 309).<sup>118</sup> The long-term survival of such offices, then, could be understood in these terms as the result of sustained external pressure. Barth, too, as mentioned above, largely understood the importance of the Basseri chief in these terms. Garthwaite, for instance, demonstrated a long-term pattern of strong central governments in Iran and strong political centralization among the Bakhtiari:

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<sup>118</sup> The idea that external pressures can cause the appearance of a political leader among otherwise egalitarian societies can be found also in Sahlins's writings about the origin of political leadership arising from inter-tribal competition. Sahlins nonetheless stressed the ephemerality and structural weakness of such offices: "We take the following then as fundamental facts of tribal political life: 1). Because small, equivalent tribal segments tend to be economically and socially self-sustaining, equal, and autonomous, the normal political state is toward disunity among them. There is no permanent organized confederation of these segments. 2). Small segments of a tribe will, however, consolidate to meet external competition. The specific nature of tribal structure of course permits greater or less consolidation in different cases, but disregarding this for the moment, the level of political consolidation within the tribe is generally proportionate to the requirements of external competition. 3). Yet a tribe will automatically return to the state of disunity—local autonomy—and remain there when competition is in abeyance" (1961: 326).

Periods when a Bakhtiari confederation... may have existed earlier within a strong traditional state, would include the reigns of Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) and Shah Abbas II (1642-66); documentation supports the hypothesis in that circumstance for the periods of Nadir Shah (1736-47), Karim Khan Zand (1751-79) and Nasir al-Din Shah (1848-96). Periods characterized by weak state structures, or their absence altogether - when smaller competing segments characterized the Bakhtiari - would possibly include pre- and late Safavid time, and can be supported by sources for the years preceding Karim Khan Zand's consolidation of his power, the reigns of the early Qajars, and the decade of World War I... An example of the Bakhtiari under a centralized state - again, with the break-up into lesser units but in this instance initiated by the state - is dramatically illustrated by Riza Shah's destruction of the Bakhtiari confederational structure in the early 1930s.

1983: 315-16

This pattern obtained either because the political centralization and hierarchization of a segmentary lineage society occurred in opposition to the interests of the state, or as a direct result of a process of bureaucratic encapsulation where individual leaders were selected and supported by the state (1983: 320). This allowed Garthwaite to argue that the historical record of the Bakhtiari demonstrated that "the potential for tribal confederation" and, hence, political centralization and hierarchy, "is directly proportional to the strength of an external stimulus" (1983: 314). Nevertheless, I contend that this association, and the structural position of the chief relative to camp group leaders alone, does not justify the Basseri chiefs' autocratic natures, nor the post-segmentary lineage system character of Basseri society in general any more than any other post-segmentary lineage society with a highly centralized and hierarchical power structure. The institutionalization of these powers must result from the original existence of coercive means of force, whether physical, economic, or both. Among the 'tribal confederacies' of the Western Zagros, it is not hard to imagine that integration into the Iranian state, and the support of the state for an agreeable leader, afforded chiefs access to such coercive means.

The fact that such a situation of encapsulation of the Sarhadi Baluch did not lead to the development of a hierarchical political structure, then, seems to have depended upon both the material difficulties of physically coercing the Sarhadi Baluch population, owing to their mobility, and the lack of a strong economic basis by which to do so. The importance of mobility in both precluding the development of political relations of geographic propinquity within a segmentary lineage system, and counteracting any tendency toward political hierarchization, was mentioned previously, as was the characteristic volatility of a mobile pastoral economy in relation to the difficulty of maintaining long-term relationships of economic inequality. But the survival of a segmentary lineage system among the Sarhadi Baluch also resulted from historical contingencies, specifically the strategy of indirect rule over the Sarhadi Baluch taken by the Iranian state (Salzman 2000: 318). Nevertheless, there are hints that the development of such a power structure might have been underway in Sarhadi Baluch society at the time of Salzman's study of that group. Specifically water rights seem to have been a large potential source of economic disparity, the chiefly family often having highly disproportionate access to irrigation water supplied by pumps and *kans*.

At Garonchin, irrigated by a large diesel motor contributed by the government of the province of Sistan and Baluchistan, there was a total of 336 hours of irrigation, a 14-day cycle. The chief of the Yarahmadzai, Sardar Han Mahmud, who had negotiated the contribution, took 150 hours, giving his two brothers 24 hours each and two nephews 12 hours each, a sum of 222 hours, or two-thirds of the water, for the chiefly family. The other third of the water was distributed, mostly in amounts of 2 to 6 hours, among 26 members of lineages... customarily associated with the neighborhood of Garonchin.

Why did the Sardar have 45 percent of the irrigation water? What he said to me was that he planned to keep 48 for himself and give the rest of the 150 hours to members of his lineage, the Yarmahmudzai. But they did not come to claim and use this water, so he kept it for himself. The Sardar also said that previously he had only 48 hours, with the rest allocated to the Yarmahmudzai, but

they did not pitch in to repair and keep up the irrigation system. He also said that, for the cultivation of watermelon, 150 hours of irrigation was needed.

Salzman 2000: 127

The *sardar*'s inability to definitively account for the present conditions of water access demonstrates that none of his explanations are completely truthful, and that at least one was an outright lie. But why would the *sardar* lie about this? Because he knows that he is doing something immoral, in terms of the morality dictated by the Sarhadi Baluch's segmentary lineage structure. The water pump was a resource provided for his entire tribe, but he was instead using it to his near-exclusive economic advantage, presumably to gain some sort of economic edge over his lineage mates, one that might be advantageous to the preservation of his office, one of the requirements of which was the strong requirement to supply hospitality to visitors and petitioners. The introduction of irrigation agriculture to the Sarhad was a relatively recent innovation at the time of Salzman's study of the region. It is likely that the repercussions of this new technology, and its fullest establishment, had not yet been felt. The mere two decades in which the practice had come to the area could not have been long enough to leave any strong traces in the structural systems of the Sarhadi Baluch themselves, but it was possibly beginning to exert some amount of structural friction—an indirect consequence of Iranian bureaucratic encapsulation. Furthermore, there is to be considered the friction felt by the *sardar* himself, sometimes charged by the central government with motivating his fellow tribesmen towards one course of action, while not actually possessing the coercive means by which to effect such political will. Salzman argued that this was the case even before encapsulation, as evidenced by an exchange between General Dyer and the then-Yarahmadzai *sardar*:

When General Dyer (1921: 71) rebuked Jiand Han for the Yarahmadzai raids into the British Raj, ‘Jiand admitted the force of all my arguments,... but pleaded that he himself had done his best to restrain his men from interfering with the British lines of communication, warning them that [it] was neither safe nor wise.’ Dyer (1927: 71) did not believe him: ‘He could not seriously have expected that I would swallow this excuse, as he was known to be held in such awe by his followers that not one of them would have dared to dispute his authority.’

2000: 307, citing Dyer 1921

As Salzman pointed out, though, “there is no reason to believe that the Sardar Jiand Han had the authority to restrict raiding if the tribesmen were in favor of it” (2000: 307-8).

Whether or not encapsulation necessarily leads to the disintegration of segmentary lineage systems, as seems inevitable in this brief overview, surely such a situation is the result of the modern military and economic edge enjoyed by modern nation states over the traditional economies of the mobile pastoral communities within and on the frontiers of, their borders. In a pre-modern condition, we would expect the relationships to have more often approximated a technological parity.

### *Conclusion*

Egalitarianism, then, defined in opposition to hierarchy, as a system or structure lacking a pre-eminent individual or group, characterizes the political aspect of segmentary lineage systems. While there may be relations of political seniority between groups or individuals in such a society, such relationships are relative and have clearly defined moral boundaries. This observations is borne out both by the empirical study of segmentary lineage societies and post-/non-segmentary lineage societies carried out in this chapter. Within these contexts, the existence of a ‘chief’ or individual of specific political significance seems to indicate the importance of political relationships beyond the society, with politics not understood to relate to it through the same principle of

common descent.<sup>119</sup> In segmentary lineage societies, these chiefly officers lack bases for exerting their own political will through ideology or force, either economic or physical, instead relying entirely upon their ability to persuade fellow tribesmen into a unified course of action. As such, their actions and decisions are typically reflective of overall group sentiment. Such individuals are leaders, rather than rulers, and are largely representatives of the interests of their society and its members to foreign groups.

By contrast, chiefly offices characterized by a degree of autocratic, arbitrary power, especially when that power is at least partially contingent upon a structural, institutionalized and naturalized basis, are not found in truly segmentary lineage societies. The initial basis for such power, and required for its maintenance, is some source of economic or physical coercion. Typically when such hierarchical political offices are found, however, imbalances in both categories are readily apparent. The emergence of a hierarchical chiefly office can have its beginnings, then, in what is initially either source of imbalance. It has been demonstrated, above, that both mobility and autarky, as dependent upon a specific economic system requiring both the private ownership of chattel, and communal access to natural resources, by their nature preclude the emergence of stratified political offices in a segmentary lineage system. It follows, then, that control of these natural resources, whether as a consequence of ecological change leading to higher predictability and/or concentration of their distribution, or technological changes leading to their control or manufacture, would result in an imbalance of the economic system of day-to-day interaction that would eventually lead to structural changes and the emergence of political hierarchy. At the same time, loss of

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<sup>119</sup> In this way, such relationships can be characterized as ‘foreign’ or ‘international’, being as they are governed by different rules and assumptions than those that guide the internal ‘domestic’ sociopolitical system.



mobility, or technological changes which allow that mobility be overcome, either by opportunistic elements within a segmentary lineage society, or by an external polity, could also upset the system and provide for a means of arbitrary power that, eventually, could cause institutional change resulting in the naturalization of those political relationships. The investment of a foreign, sedentary polity in the office of an 'egalitarian' chief—a leader as opposed to a ruler—could eventually transform that office into one of real political authority and power, such as seems to have occurred among the Basseri and may have just begun among the Sarhadi Baluch at the time of Salzman's study. The third correlate of a segmentary lineage system, then, is individual freedom and an ethic of political equality between households and higher-order segments.

## **Conclusion**

Segmentary lineage systems have here been demonstrated to have three primary correlates: mobility, multi-resource productive activities including pastoralism resulting in autarky, and a certain value of egalitarianism, the latter correlate both resulting from and reinforcing the two former correlates. As the investigation of these features has been pursued and their association has been explained over the course of this chapter, an implicit model of segmentary lineage systems has developed. It remains now to conclude the arguments presented in this chapter by making this model explicit and demonstrating how it differs from other models of segmentary lineages and mobile pastoral societies. By the end of this discussion, both the validity and the merits of the approach proposed here should be clear to the reader.

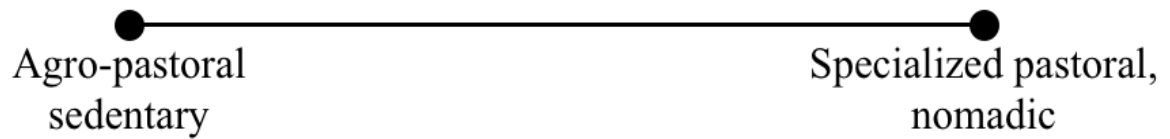
The understanding of segmentary lineage systems proposed in this dissertation largely parallels a model that has been championed by Philip Carl Salzman (1996a, 1996b, 2000, 2008). Salzman has consistently argued that segmentary lineage structures serve the purpose of structuring social, economic, and political interactions among mobile pastoralist without reference to spatial location, while safeguarding access to vital economic resources, especially pasturage and water. Segmentary lineage systems, then, are a distinct type of sociopolitical system characterized by unilineal (and in each case so far identified, patrilineal) segments operating on a principle of balanced opposition, which serves to provide a stable sociopolitical framework for moral action in such conditions where the accumulation of political power, which would undermine the segmentary lineage system and its principle of balanced opposition, is precluded by those very structural institutions.<sup>120</sup> It is ideally suited for situations of mobility and pastoral production—but not specialized production which would necessitate close interaction with a sedentary society and market economy, which could easily lead to either the political domination of the segmentary lineage society and the eclipse of its structuring principles in this way, or the development of sources of political coercion that could lead to a destruction of those structures from within the society—because it allows for the common ownership and protection of a territory in which naturally occurring resources are shared by independent producers, each otherwise owning and being responsible for their own means and forces of production. The segmentary structure along with balanced

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<sup>120</sup> In this way, societies characterized by a segmentary lineage system can be understood to be distinct polities, in that way comparable to a 'state'. Though clearly different from a state in both its form and relative lack of structural variability, it nevertheless qualifies as a kind of maximal corporate political unit and interacts with other polities in an 'international' way—without reference to internal structuring principles. In this way, the complexity of 'tribe and state' and 'tribe and tribe' relations—when this term is defined as a segmentary lineage society—can be understood as being just as complex as international relationships between states, including actions of warfare.

opposition, then, also provides a measure of security and a legal framework which allows those producers to associate freely on the basis of their economic interests. Such a system, though highly specific in terms of structure, nevertheless seems to have described societies throughout space and history and underlies assumed correlations between mobility, pastoralism, egalitarianism, and opposition to state structures. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, these correlations can only be explained with reference to an explicit structural model of segmentary lineage systems, identified through ethnographic literature, with special attention paid to disparities between folk models and observed sociopolitical actions and the reasons underlying those disparities. This latter fact is due to the rapidly changing nature of relationships between modern territorial states, with recent access to new technological advantages, both military and economic, and mobile pastoral groups found within their borders.

There seem to be almost as many different understandings of what segmentary lineage systems are as there are ethnographers. Once one widens the field to consider all treatments of ‘tribalism’—when standing as a catch-all term for an ethnic or cultural ‘other,’ distinct from sedentary societies—the task becomes herculean. Through a review of just one such treatment, representative of many of the typical shortcomings of previous approaches though differing in some specificities, a more complete understanding of the model offered here, and its strengths, can be gained and the merit of this structural model can be more clearly appreciated. A brief article offered by way of conclusion to an edited volume concerning *Pastoralism in the Levant* edited by Ofer Bar-Yosef and Anatoly Khazanov (1992) and penned by the popular Bedouin ethnographer, Emanuel Marx will more than adequately serve this purpose.



**Figure 3.3. The mobile pastoral continuum**

In this article (1992), as many other ethnographers have done, Marx approached the topic of ‘tribalism’ obliquely, through a consideration more specifically of pastoral nomadism.<sup>121</sup> Like Khazanov and others, Marx in this study treated pastoralism as a continuum from sedentary agriculturalists, who practice pastoralism as a supplementary subsistence strategy, to fully nomadic pastoralists who endeavor to rely only on pastoral production. This concept can be illustrated diagrammatically as in figure 3.3, above. As is usual, and as is certainly the case with Khazanov, this continuum model rapidly degenerates into one of binary opposition. Marx’s language in this article is concerned exclusively with the sedentary as opposed to the specialized pastoral nomad. That this binary opposition is an oversimplification should be clear in light of the preceding material of this chapter. Nevertheless, it is the logical consequence of a common assumption on the part of Marx (1992: 256), and one that was buttressed, unfortunately, through the work of Khazanov: the idea that pastoralists are, by definition, non-autarkic. This *a priori* assumption, one that has been demonstrated to be suspect, above, led Marx and others to privilege the importance of the state and the sedentary world when understanding the “pastoral nomad”. Marx, for instance, stated that “almost the entire material culture of the nomads then originates in the city,” and “...at no time do they

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<sup>121</sup> He nevertheless invoked ‘tribalism’ early in his discussion without defining it, a typical feature of such studies.

escape the total and unilateral dependence on the settled population and the authorities” (1992: 257-58). While this may be true of contemporary specialized pastoralists, as has been argued in this chapter, coupled with the assumption that all pastoral endeavors are, by definition, non-autarkic it eventually led Marx to argue, in conclusion to his article, that

... it is no longer useful to describe a particular population as pastoral nomads. All one can say is that at a certain moment a segment of the population is engaged in the production of animals for the urban market. Within months, that very same segment may have become transformed into cultivators or urban proletariat. Even if we should encounter that relatively rare phenomenon, a group of pure pastoral nomads, it would be misleading to categorize them as such. For by calling them ‘pastoral nomads’ we give precedence to one social trait over all others, and impose on a temporary occupation a false permanence.

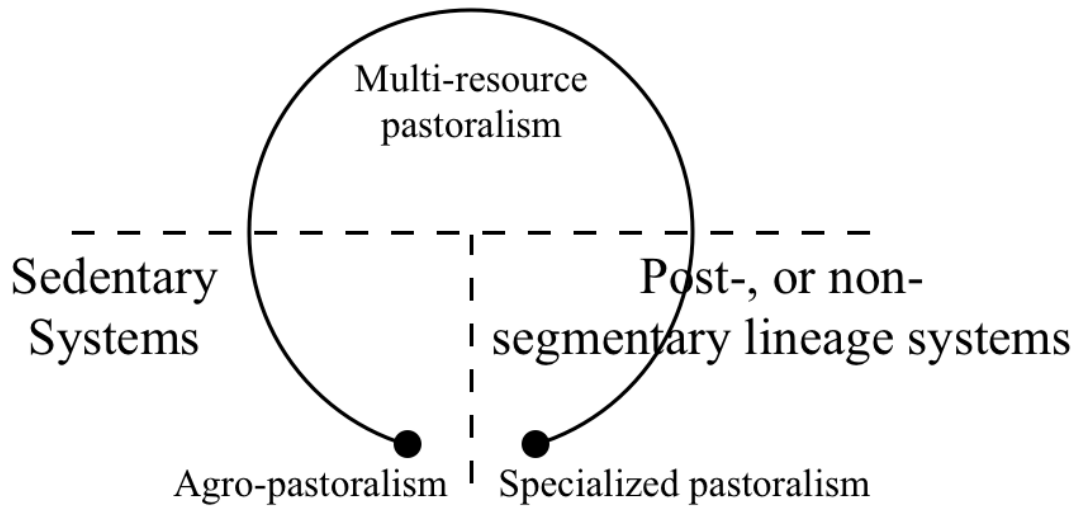
Marx 1992: 259

The statement Marx makes in the above citation, taken by itself and away from the context provided for it here, is completely absurd. To suggest that pastoral nomadism is not a useful category for the study of a human population is to suggest that it is meaningless and carries no sociopolitical consequence whatsoever. It must be remembered, though, how Marx arrived at this conclusion. Through the assumption that pastoralists are non-autarkic, and completely subject to the whim and will of the sedentary society, such a statement might still offend the sensibilities of some readers, but is at least not as absurd as it would seem at first. Marx, however, was actually aided into this absurd position by his ethnographic experience of a modernizing world where ‘nomads’ were largely at the mercy of territorial nation states with access to modern technologies, both military and, perhaps even more insidiously, economic. In that context, mobile pastoral populations were certainly converted ‘almost overnight’ into a

sedentary proletariat, but this situation is far from indicative of the structural division between those two social forms.

A broader reading of the ethnographic literature with attention to structural change, and an appreciation for the possibility of pastoral autarky leads instead to the reformulation of the sedentary pastoralist/nomadic pastoralist binary opposition into a continuum again, but this time adapted to the resulting investigations of this chapter. This new continuum can be presented diagrammatically as in figure 3.4, below. Here, the old continuum-model of pastoralism and mobility can more profitably be understood as a sort of horseshoe, with either end of the continuum being rooted in a sedentary world of political hierarchy, and the bent middle, corresponding to multi-resource pastoralism, being complementary to segmentary lineage structures. The extreme ends of the continuum still, to some extent, constitute the binary opposition embraced by Khazanov and Marx, amongst many others, but their relationship to one another can be more adequately understood through an appreciation of segmentary lineage structures as they have been presented in this dissertation. For instance, whereas Marx rightly insisted on rejecting the old paradigm of antagonism and struggle between the desert and the sown, corresponding to pastoralists and agriculturalists, I maintain that this disparity is much more structurally than geographically grounded. The observation that these different societies may have had relationships “of mutual benefit to both parties” (1992: 257) is appreciated, but it must also be maintained that there were and are real structural differences that could constitute a sociopolitical rift between those societies. Both systems are informed by their own independent moral-political logic. It is for that reason that, as Marx observes, a state treats a mobile pastoral ‘tribe’ as “a traditional closed

## Segmentary Lineage Systems



**Figure 3.4. The mobile pastoral continuum, revised**

society” (1992: 258). This is not because administrators do not understand the sociopolitical structure of such societies.<sup>122</sup> They do it because, in contradiction to Marx’s conviction otherwise, these mobile pastoral ‘tribes’ *do constitute independent polities*, with their own political, social and legal structures and logic, *even when they are politically dominated by state polities*, at least until those structures break down with succeeding generations, as has been common in the period following the Second World War. It is not simply that ‘tribalism’ is a frame of mind, as Tapper has argued, but rather that there is a frame of life correlating to a mobile pastoral society. It is a whole sociopolitical system and it operates on different premises than states or other sedentary societies by virtue of its own internal logic. This system has come to be called a segmentary lineage system.

<sup>122</sup> In fact, they understand something about tribalism that Emanuel Marx does not!

In conclusion, the purpose of the last two chapters has been to introduce, develop, and defend this concept of segmentary lineage systems to the field of ancient Near Eastern studies and justify its structural specificity. In this chapter, case studies were marshaled to determine and demonstrate what the cultural correlates and structuring logic of segmentary lineage systems are. It has been argued that segmentary lineage systems do correlate with mobility, as far as mobility serves to diffuse the possibility of relations of propinquity that might otherwise undermine lineage solidarity. Furthermore, mobility serves the role of diffusing hierarchical political power either through the avoidance of external polities, or the desertion of would-be autocrats within the group. Second, it has been shown that pastoralism, along with a reasonably wide subsistence base can correlate with mobility, and can provide economic autarky, providing the possibility for political independence, which is integral to the functioning of segmentary lineage systems. Specialized pastoralism, however, by definition seems to undercut these segmentary lineage structures. Third, it has been demonstrated that relations of political authority contradict these structuring principles, and it has been explained how relations of political heterarchy found within segmentary lineage societies are founded upon economic realities that serve to reify moral values of heterarchy, or at least do not provide a basis for individual economic interests to contradict those moral values. This model of segmentary lineage systems can be readily applied to historical sources relevant to the EBA of Syria in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. First, however, it remains to develop a material model of this sociological model that can be applied to the EBA Syrian archaeological record. This is the task for the following chapter.



Although it will be argued that material and sociopolitical evidence for mobile pastoral groups generally, and segmentary lineage systems more specifically are lacking in the archaeological and historical records of EBA Syria, it is nevertheless necessary to elucidate these systems and their material implications as completely as possible. This serves the dual purpose of distinguishing the approach to these topics that have been taken in this dissertation and supplying models against which the results of future research may be compared to re-evaluate the question of the role of such groups in EBA Syria.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Material Correlates of Segmentary Lineage Systems**

In Chapter 2, a definition of segmentary lineage systems, and previous reasons for the rejection of such systems as more than mere folk models, were established.

Segmentary lineage systems are organized on a principle of balanced opposition between segments organized in a nested hierarchy of unilineal relationships. In Chapter 3, the relationship between these structural features other cultural features, most significantly mobility, pastoralism, and political egalitarianism, was established through examination of case studies. As it is one goal of this dissertation to investigate the nature of pastoral production in the archaeological record of EBA Syria, and the potential effects of that production, through the possibility of the existence of segmentary lineage systems, it is necessary now to establish the material culture characteristics that correlate with these structures—in other words, to produce a material model of segmentary lineage systems. This task involves not only the identification of material correlates of mobility, pastoralism, and egalitarianism, especially as they have been recorded among contemporary mobile pastoral societies, but, as in Chapter 3, also a critical consideration of how the modern contexts of these analogues is likely to skew an understanding of ancient subjects proceeding from their study. In Chapter 5, material factors specific to the Syrian EBA will be considered more specifically.

### **The Material Context of Prehistoric Segmentary Lineage Systems**

Because it was established in Chapter 3 that segmentary lineage systems correlate with mobility, pastoralism, and egalitarianism, such societies as fit these criteria will

serve in this chapter as analogues of first recourse, especially mobile pastoral groups, regardless of any egalitarian nature. Observations from these ‘presentist’ analogues will be amended as necessary to correspond with the more specific nature of segmentary lineage systems, transcending these limitations by the nature of its structural definition, and adapted for a pre-modern material context. The differences in material context between ancient subjects and contemporary analogues are likely to be complex and difficult to anticipate completely. Nevertheless, it seems intuitive that these differences will relate either directly or indirectly to technological differences between ancient and modern periods. On the one hand this deals with the presence of modern consumer goods, which, being manufactured from metal, plastic, glass, and synthetic fibers may be expected to be persistent and well represented in the archaeological record of contemporary populations. EBA access to any of these materials except for metal, of course, would have been essentially impossible, and metal objects would likely have been too valuable to often find their way into the archaeological record. Household goods and tools, then, are much more likely to have been made of stone, ceramics, and natural fibers and, in the latter case, are unlikely to be well represented for ancient subject societies. The other major technological difference, and one which seems to have myriad implications, relates to mobility, and concerns both livestock and beasts of burden. In the modern Middle and ancient Near East this means principally domesticated donkeys and camels.

## **Material Correlates of Mobility in Mobile Pastoral Societies**

It has become a cliché to begin discussions of mobile pastoral groups by citing an early to mid-twentieth century scholar claiming that such groups are, necessarily, invisible in the archaeological record (e.g. Childe 1936: 81; Beardsley et al. 1955; Hole 1962: 524; Kenyon 1979: 204-206) and to then proceed to cite the successes of prehistorians in finding and studying the remains of hunter-gatherers, with the implication being that they are just as mobile and are likely to leave just as ephemeral traces on the landscape (e.g. Cribb 1991a: 65-66; Miragliuolo 1979: 180-181). One can proceed, then, to point out that historically attested mobile pastoral analogues were known to leave behind traces of their activities, especially at campsites, as is well established in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century travelogues of North Africa and Southwest and Central Asia (e.g. Burckhardt 1830; Musil 1928; Doughty 1936). In light of such arguments it is worth pointing out that the interpretation of material culture as belonging to hunter-gatherers in a region is unambiguous only when those remains pre-date the arrival of agriculture or husbandry. It is far more controversial when they occur on the chronological and geographical boundaries of these phenomena. The attribution of recently abandoned campsites to contemporary mobile pastoral populations, also, is much easier to establish than would be a similar association of ancient remains. It is also worth noting that *most* forms of human activity leave only ephemeral traces in the archaeological record, including those of rural, sedentary, full-time agriculturalists. As Frank Hole has pointed out, traditional survey methods were not intended or designed to find small, ephemeral sites of human activity but rather obvious, obtrusive ruin mounds (1979: 200-201). Smith (2008) used the case of the Khoekhoen (Hottentots) of southwest

Africa to demonstrate that nomadic invisibility is a real problem in some cases. The Khoekhoen are well attested in the accounts of 17<sup>th</sup> century and later travelers who note their pastoral lifestyle and large herds. The remains of these herds or camps from this era, though, are unknown archaeologically, despite the efforts of extensive surveys to identify such remains. Smith suggested this is a result of both the Khoekhoen's own transience at this time, as well as destruction wrought by modern plowing (2008: 265-267). The difficulty in identifying specifically mobile pastoral remains, then, and the question of their 'visibility' lies on three fronts: first, in finding the traces of particularly ephemeral human cultural practices in the archaeological record in the first place. Second, in interpreting subsistence practices from the traces left in the archaeological record. Third, in determining the presence and character of a mobile aspect to an artifact, feature, structure, or site. The present section is concerned with the first and third of these issues. Fortunately, mobile groups have been the subjects of explicit study by archaeologists for at least the last six decades, despite early pessimism concerning their visibility, and over this time considerable effort has been made to determine how to identify the remains of pastoral nomadic campsites (e.g. Juli 1978; Hole 1980; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992; Ur and Hammer 2009). This discussion will begin at the most specific level of resolution, that of the artifact, and will then proceed to expand its scope to architectural and regional considerations of mobile characteristics. A similar format will be followed for the consideration of both pastoral and egalitarian features.

### *Livestock and beasts of burden*

Past generations of scholars have been frequently criticized for drawing anachronistic parallels between modern Bedouin groups and alleged ancient analog societies. The biggest difference between those Bedouin and pre-modern, or at least pre-Iron Age populations of mobile pastoralists is the presence of the domesticated camel. Presently, two distinct species of camel are recognized: the two-humped Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*) and the single-humped dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius*). The Bactrian camel is more commonly found in the colder regions and higher altitudes of central Asia, while the dromedary is found in the hotter, drier climates of Southwest Asia and North Africa. It is unclear exactly how the present separation of the two species relates to the process of their domestication (Gauthier-Pilters and Dagg 1981: 3), but it is commonly assumed that two chronologically and geographically distinct processes of domestication were carried out for each. There is no clear evidence to suggest when or where the Bactrian camel was first domesticated, though it seems their use as pack animals in Central Asia could date as far back as the early third millennium (Peters and Von Den Driesch 1997: 661), far earlier than their appearance in southwest Asia. The domestication of the dromedary is typically assumed to have occurred later, in the Arabian peninsula. The earliest suggested evidence of domestication there is hypothesized herd management inferred from culling patterns at the third millennium BC site of Umm an-Nar, in Abu Dhabi (Hoch 1979). More recently, though, Uerpmann and Uerpmann have argued that the domesticated dromedary camel did not appear in the Arabian peninsula until some time between the fourteenth and ninth centuries BC (2012). Recently, nine bones identified as the remains of dromedary camels were excavated at

Tell Sheikh Hamad in a context dating to the twelfth or thirteenth century BC (Becker 2008: 84), thus constituting the earliest camel remains identified in Syria. Camels are otherwise not widely attested, either archaeologically or historically outside of the Arabian Peninsula until the Neo-Assyrian period. At the very least, the lack of any textual reference to camels in the Mari texts suggest that the camel was not a significant domesticate in that part of Syria at any time before the latter half of the second millennium BC, and so will not figure into any consideration of the EBA.

A beast of burden that would possibly have been widespread among mobile pastoral peoples in Syria during the EBA was the domesticated ass (*Equus africanus asinus*)—the donkey. The presence of the donkey would have greatly increased the potential mobile capacity of EBA populations there.

The donkey is usually thought to have been domesticated from two extant African species, the Nubian and Somali wild asses (*E. africanus africanus* and *E. africanus somaliensis*, respectively) (Beja Pereira et al. 2004), though recently some question has been raised as to the role played by *E. a. somaliensis* on the basis of mitochondrial DNA studies (Kimura et al. 2011). It is not clear where or when this process of domestication began, but the earliest identified remains of a domesticated donkey are reported from the fifth millennium site of Ma'adi, near Cairo (Caneva et al. 1987: 107). Recently, the remains of ten donkeys recovered from an Early Dynastic tomb at Abydos were shown to be morphologically similar to wild asses, but also to demonstrate evidence that the animals were used to carry heavy loads during their lives (Rossell et al. 2008). This finding raises the possibility that earlier specimens of domesticated asses, whether found

in Egypt or Southwest Asia, could easily be misinterpreted as being of wild origin, when in fact they were also used as beasts of burden.

Several different lines of evidence suggest that domesticated donkeys were already present, if not widespread in Southwest Asia, beginning in the early part of the EBA. For instance, Ovardia attributed an increase of equid remains in EBA sites in the Levant with the appearance of the domestic donkey there (1992: 20). The earliest textual references to donkeys in the cuneiform corpus date at least to the Early Dynastic period, and possibly attest to its presence in Sumer as far back as the late fourth millennium (Postgate 1986a: 200-201). Zeder identified the remains of what were likely to be domesticated donkeys at the site of Tal-e Malyan in Fars Province, Southern Iran, half way between Susa and Tepe Yahya, in contexts dating to as early as the twenty-eighth century, BC (1986: 407). Given a hypothesized North African domestication of the species, this suggests either a rapid dispersal by the beginning of the EBA, or an even earlier origin. The possibility of a rapid diffusion of the donkey from its initial point of domestication seems to be confirmed by a recent mitochondrial DNA study, which shows little genetic distinction between wild Nubian asses and present-day populations of domesticated Bulgarian donkeys (Pérez-Pardal et al. 2013).

What would be the significance of the presence of domesticated donkeys during most, if not all, of the EBA in Syria, but the absence of domesticated camels in any significant number, whether Bactrian or Dromedary? An appreciation of their differences is necessary if the suitability of modern mobile analog societies is to be assessed and conclusions drawn from their material record are to be adapted to an EBA model. Both the donkey and the camel permit a certain amount of mobility, especially in the company



of heavy goods, which would otherwise be impossible. Only the dromedary camel, though, allows for the extensive exploitation of extremely dry desert and steppe environments. Dromedaries are not simply tolerant of desert and dry conditions, but adapted specifically for them. They have evolved to favor regions receiving between 50 and 150 millimeters of rain per annum. Gauthier-Pilters and Dagg summarize the camel's many adaptations to the desert, including their preference for dry and salty vegetation (1981: 41-42), their ability to go for up to three to five days without water in extreme heat, eight days in normal working conditions, and over two weeks when daily high temperatures fall between 30 and 35° C (1981: 50, 55). In fact, they reported that camels even refused water offered to them during the cooler half of the year in the Sahara (1981: 50). Further adaptations include

their ability to conserve water by producing little urine and dry feces; eyes that are adapted to excessive light and are protected against sand; nostrils that can close to keep out sand and that have cavities where inspired air is moistened and exhaled air can be cooled, reducing water loss; the localized storage of energy as fat in the hump; the diurnal rise in body temperature in hot weather to conserve water; fur that provides insulation to some extent during hot ambient temperatures; sweat glands that provide evaporative cooling when necessary; behavior that minimizes exposure to heat; the ability to endure extreme dehydration without serious effect; a low metabolic rate, which reduces the need for water; and the ability to recycle urea when food protein is limited.

Gauthier-Pilters and Dagg 1981: 59

In addition to these desert adaptations, the dromedary is also an exceptionally sturdy pack animal. Gauthier-Pilters and Dagg related that their hired camels "carried about 120 kilograms each for 30 kilometers 6 hours a day," equivalent with the demands of nomads, on the basis of a single day's work, though their own caravan persisted in this fashion daily for a month (1981: 36). They also reported that "the camels of nomads generally carry maximum loads of 150 kilograms each, but they can carry up to 300 kilograms for a

short distance” (1981: 109-110). They cited other accounts which suggest that camels can carry more than 200 kilograms long distance, and more than 400 kilograms over a short distance (1981: 110). All of this can be done without access to food or water for days at a time, demands that are usually only made by trade caravans and not even the most mobile of pastoral desert-dwellers. The dromedary’s adaptations to extreme heat and aridity significantly increased humankind’s ability to live in, and travel through, desert environments, especially with large loads of goods for trade and this has earned it the clichéd, though appropriate appellation “the ship of the desert”. Nevertheless, the ability of the common ass to expand human mobility through arid environments should not be overlooked. Despite dissimilar appearance, where the donkey differs from the dromedary it is in most respects only by degrees. Like the dromedary camel, feral populations of *E. a. asinus* are found to range naturally in arid regions where daily temperatures can exceed 50° C (Grinder et al. 2006: 4), though its hooves make it more tolerant of rocky terrain than most dromedaries (Groves 1974). Like camels, donkeys will spend large amounts of time grazing on low-quality, dry fodder (Grinder et al. 2006: 3). It has even been reported that the wild Asiatic cousin of the donkey, the onager (*E. hemionus*), can abstain from drinking water at all for much of the year, obtaining moisture, like camels, from the consumption of succulent plants (Groves 1986: 38). *E. a. asinus*, however, does not typically range more than four to six kilometers from water sources, though it can reportedly go for more than three days without drinking (Grinder et al. 2006: 4). Because the donkey is much smaller than the camel (the average adult standing between 110 and 140 centimeters, whereas the dromedary camel averages between 180 and 210 centimeters at the shoulder), and lacks the convex, humped back to

resist compression on its spine, it cannot be loaded as heavily. In the early twentieth century, the British War Office Veterinary Department prescribed a maximum load for a donkey moving six hours a day at 100 pounds (1923: 280), equivalent to just over 45 kilograms.<sup>123</sup> While the maximum load that a donkey can sustain over a short distance, or in an extreme situation where the welfare of the animal might be willingly compromised, is possibly close to twice this much, in general the typical ass-load might be characterized as having roughly one-third the weight of the typical dromedary-load. While not quite as resistant as the camel to arid conditions, and not able to carry as much of a load per individual, the donkey is more adaptable to variable terrain and enjoys a distribution up to, and sometimes beyond, the fringes of the desert. If the camel, then, can fairly be called “the ship of the desert”, then certainly the donkey must be characterized as “the ship of the steppe”.

The significance of the camel and donkey for pre-modern societies, of course, lies primarily in their nature as pack animals, though also secondarily as sources of milk, meat, and fiber. They both allow for the easier transportation of goods, especially in hot, arid environments and increase the opportunities to exploit otherwise unreachable desert oases. The penetration of the Sahara by the dromedary camel is total, while the domesticated donkey seemingly cannot range far into the high desert. Thus, it should be expected that the presence of pre-camel nomads in desert areas of the ancient Near East will have been restricted. The domestication of the donkey may have increased

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<sup>123</sup> While this limit is in line with contemporary recommendations, there seems to be a great deal of variability on this point. For instance, near the end of the first World War, the *Kartographische Abteilung der Königlichen Preußischen Landesaufnahme* published a much higher, maximum load limit of 90 kgs (1917: 62), which seems to be in general accord with the normal load size of the so-called ‘black asses’ of the Old Assyrian texts (Lewy 1964: 186). Except in very general terms, though, it is not useful to compare modern to ancient loads, especially in the case of asses, which are known to vary considerably between breeds, especially as a result of selective breeding.

penetration of these regions somewhat, but a reliance on sheep and goat pastoralism would have played the most significant limiting role in pastoral ranges. Goats are hardier than sheep in arid environments and are able to subsist on a wider variety of plants (Clutton-Brock 1981: 57-58). The black bedouin goat would seem to be the most adapted modern breed to arid conditions and has been shown to go without access to water often for up to four days at a time without significant biological disruption, and while maintaining high milk yields (Silanikove 2000: 182). Access to camels or donkeys, then, would have potentially affected mobile pastoral societies in two ways. First, they would have expanded the possible range of exploitation for resource extraction, even if they did not increase the mobility of humans with small ruminant herds, in ways that could have been similar to the Sarhadi Baluch's more than two hundred mile annual trek to their date palm groves, as related by Salzman (2000: 109) in the previous chapter. Such a pattern implies a complex form of mobility where the herds would remain in one ecological zone with part of the population, while another section moved away, seasonally, as in the case of the Sarhadi Baluch. Second, camels and donkeys would have allowed for the accumulation of personal property and especially domestic chattel, facilitating the movement of more and heavier goods between temporary campsites. Neither species is the object of much labor amongst pastoral groups that specialize in small ruminants, and the more widespread contemporary range of *E. e. asinus* suggests its relatively greater ability to adapt to a wider range of ecological zones. The effective difference in significance for mobile societies between the two species would seem to relate then only to the relatively greater acclimation of the camel to long treks across high desert.

This conclusion stands in contradiction to a recent ethnohistorical and archaeological study of the camel and tent in the ancient Near East. Drawing widely from ethnographic and historical sources, but limiting their archaeological perspective to the Negev, Rosen and Saidel have argued that “there is a logical functional linkage between the camel and the tent in that only the domestication of the camel provided the means to transport heavy goat hair tents over long distances in the extreme environments of the Near Eastern deserts and steppes” (2010: 63). It is important to note that Rosen and Saidel are not arguing that mobile pastoralism was impossible before the domestication of the camel, or that other forms of temporary shelters were not employed before this time, either. Instead, they choose to define the tent as the (ethnographically) paradigmatic Bedouin black tent (2010: 64). Three different factors undermine the extension of this argument for camel/tent codependence to anywhere except highly arid desert zones, such as the Negev, whence the authors draw the archaeological portion of their data. Rosen and Saidel first attempt to justify their camel/tent association by appealing to ethnographic data relating to the weight of the Bedouin black tent, estimating that it “can be on the order of 400-500 kg” (Rosen and Saidel 2010: 66), and therefore portable only with recourse to camels. In that passage, though, curiously, they cite Black-Michaud’s account of his time among the Rumi section of the Hasanwand Lurs, who would seem to be poor analogues. Black-Michaud described them as not frequently changing campsites or traveling very far, having “a thoroughly anti-nomadic ideology,” (1986: 2-3) and, most significantly, relying on *donkeys* for transportation (1986: 18). Furthermore, Black-Michaud stated that the upper limit on the size of a tent is actually determined “by the capacity of two mules to share this load” (1986: 170).<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> The carrying capacity of a typical mule is approximately twice that of a donkey, slightly less than half

The Rumi of the Hasanwand Lurs, then, likely enjoyed larger tents with greater amounts of household goods, owing to their relative sedentism, and transported these belongings without resorting to camels. Later in their article, Rosen and Saidel cited “Ferdinand’s description of the transport of a relatively small two-pole black tent... requiring seven camels” (2010: 67). They helpfully cite the relative passage, where Ferdinand says that only a single young camel actually carried the tent cloth, the rest being required to haul household goods, and goes on to note that some Iranian pastoralists use *donkeys* to move their tents. His assertion that “this seems to be a recent adaptation and donkeys would be ill-equipped to operate this way in the desert,” (Ferdinand 1993: 164) seems ignorant of the point that donkeys, like camels, are especially well adapted to arid environments and, in so doing, it needlessly implies that the original use of tents of similar weight must have originated in the part of the desert arid enough to be unreachable by donkeys. The argument, then, that camels are necessary to transport Bedouin-style tents, even in only semi-arid environments, cannot be sustained on the basis of the evidence that Rosen and Saidel cite.

Another weakness in their argument is that the estimation Rosen and Saidel offer of tent size seems to be at the upper range of normal. Salzman, for instance, found among the relatively mobile Sarhadi Baluch that family tents were constructed of two to three, sometimes more, goat hair panels each weighing on the order of 40 to 50 kilograms (2000: 22), by implication yielding a range of between 80 and, at most, 200 kilograms, exclusive of tent poles, posts, ropes and other household accouterments. This accords well with the estimate of an average of two adult camels per household among the Sarhadi Baluch (Salzman 2000: 103), for a total single-trip comfortable load capacity of

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that of a dromedary.

approximately 300 kilograms per household. It is worth noting that six donkeys could do as much in one trip, or three donkeys in two trips. A final source of contradictory evidence comes from Frank Hole's excavations of the prehistoric site of Tepe Tula'i in Khuzistan, which dates from the late seventh to the early sixth millennium (1975). Hole's excavations at this site revealed alignments of stones in the approximate shapes, sizes, and distributional patterns that he and his Luri workmen recognized as being fully commensurate with what were then contemporary campsites of Luri mobile pastoralists, characterized by the archetypal black-haired tent (1974: 236; 1975: 71; 1979: 210). Although both the interpretation and antiquity of the site have been questioned, this research constitutes an outstanding omission. Rosen and Saidel seem to have been too much influenced by their archaeological concentration on the Negev desert, where, by all accounts, the appearance of the Bedouin black tent and the domesticated camel *do* coincide. They seem to assume, then, that there is causation behind this correlation. That may well be the case for the Negev, but the evidence they cite in attempting to make their case is unsatisfying. The projection of this correlative/causative argument outside the Negev, then, which they advocate, would be especially suspicious. Any connection between the camel and the black tent in the Negev may have more to do with the necessity of the camel to mobile pastoral life there, specifically, and there is no reason to assume that it should be applied to more humid, steppe environments where the domesticated ass can survive comfortably, and is both able and willing to share humankind's burdens. This is not to say that any ancient populations necessarily utilized the archetypal black goat-hair tent known from contemporary Bedouin and other mobile pastoral peoples around the Near East and Central Asia, or even something like it.

Contra Rosen and Saidel, on a purely hypothetical level, this would have been feasible, even if one were completely reliant on asses. Whether and when such forms were adopted, then, is an empirical question and cannot be limited *a priori* to the period of dromedary domestication.

It seems necessary to assume the capacity of EBA populations for a degree of mobility approaching that of camel nomads, though without recourse to high desert or distant oases. Along with increased mobility, though, comes the implication of the reduced archaeological visibility of a culture. Hole's excavation and explanation of the character of Tepe Tula'i underlines this possibility by suggesting the question of what beast of burden was available in the late seventh and early sixth millennium to move campsites (if, indeed, his dating of the relevant context there is correct). He suggested that, without pack animals, articles could be moved in stages and, furthermore it is likely that mobile pastoral peoples had a much smaller set of equipment and were able to carry everything they needed on a migration on their persons. This opinion was buttressed by an informant, who told Hole: "today life is harder because people have too many things" (1978: 50). While analogy with the Lurs does not prove anything about the Neolithic residents of Tepe Tula'i—as is implied by Hole's (1979) optimistically-titled article "Discovering the Past in the Present: Ethnoarchaeology in Luristan, Iran"—it does at least demonstrate the possibility that a mobile pastoral people could exist without beasts of burden, and, assuming the architectural traces there do correlate to shelters comparable to the Bedouin black tent, could maintain relatively large, though impermanent, domestic structures, even if these were not carried large distances and were perhaps constructed mostly on the spot, in manners that hunter-gatherers and other mobile pastoral peoples



are known to employ. This line of reasoning implies that ancient pastoralists might have maintained significantly smaller repertoires of material culture than their contemporary counterparts, with an implication of reduced visibility in the archaeological record.

Another difference between ancient subjects and modern analogues that might reduce visibility is at once technological, political, and environmental. As Gilbert pointed out, because of technological changes over time, the ‘margins’ that mobile pastoralists are often characterized as inhabiting have shifted (1975: 62). In the modern world, nation states enjoy an extreme imbalance of power in their favor when engaging with mobile pastoral groups which, until recent times, tended to occupy the spaces in-between landscapes of sedentary societies. Now, however, thanks to modern technologies such as the gasoline engine and the automatic rifle, mobile pastoral peoples are easier for these states to control, pacify, and divest of potentially productive agricultural land. Furthermore, the expansion of irrigation technology and the appearance of the tractor has led to dramatic expansions of agricultural production to lands outside the rainfall zone, or too far from natural sources of surface or ground water to facilitate agricultural practice in the past. Indeed, Gilbert’s observation that ancient, pastoral peoples may have inhabited less arid environments than in recent historical periods has a myriad of implications and leads to contradictory implications for archaeological study. First, a more moist environment may have reduced, somewhat, the frequency of past migrations. This could increase the visibility of ancient mobile pastoral peoples. It also implies the wider availability of naturally occurring, extractable food resources. Alternatively, however, better conditions mean a higher carrying capacity and may have simply led to larger herds, with needs to migrate just as frequently as those of

contemporary analogues today. Increased wild resources and larger herds could imply increased independence from sedentary, agricultural societies and a greater level of autarky. The possibility that ancient nomads inhabited lands that are today near sites of cultivation, or, indeed, that are presently under cultivation or sedentary settlement also increases the chances that traces of mobile pastoral campsites have either been destroyed, or are inaccessible to the archaeologist. Banning and Köhler-Rollefson (1986: 160) pointed out that pastoralists may also inhabit areas with high agricultural potential, implying that agricultural strategies may come to predominate as the result of historical contingencies, regardless of technological or climatological changes.

Mobile pastoralists of the EBA, especially in Syria, then, are likely to have had access to at least one species of pack animal, the domestic ass. Although when, precisely, its use became widespread in Syria is not clear, it seems likely that it was a common sight on the Syrian steppe within a few centuries of the beginning of the third millennium. Nevertheless, EBA Syrian mobile pastoralists may have had somewhat fewer possessions than their historical and contemporary analogs. Some material culture from ancient mobile pastoralists, such as metal objects, are less likely to have been deposited in the archaeological record. That material which was incorporated into the archaeological record is likely to be less visible for three reasons. First, compared to contemporary nomads, a greater amount of that material was likely to have been perishable, second, it would have been more valuable and so more likely to have been recycled or repaired, and, third, it is more likely to have been deposited in areas which are now under cultivation or under settlement. One reason why authors tend to attack the dichotomization of the “desert and the sown” on one hand, yet focus their discussions on

two separate poles of sedentism and extreme mobility (e.g. Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992, Rosen and Saidel 2010), may be because the remains of mobile peoples that are best known to archaeology are those of the most extreme nomads, occupying the harshest environments, which were therefore most likely to preserve traces of their past lives.

Unfortunately, there do not exist now, nor in any historical records, any perfect analogues for application to ancient pastoral nomads of the Near East. Nevertheless, through a critical historical and ethnographic review of the contexts of a number of contemporary analogues I will synthesize a hypothetical characterization of a segmentary lineage system into a material model and adapt it for use in the investigation of the possible presence of such societies in the archaeological record of the Syrian EBA.

#### *Domestic tools and pottery*

Much consideration has gone into the question of what composes the material inventory of a mobile pastoral—and, by extension, tribal—household. Cribb has compared the inventories of eleven different ethnographically attested mobile pastoral groups and came to the conclusion that “the range of objects that may be observed in a nomad camp is comparable to that observable in Near Eastern villages” (1991a: 69). These inventories included cooking vessels and food service implements, various containers, for liquids, dry goods, and valuables, clothes, rugs, bedding, and some multi-purpose tools or weapons such as axes, rifles, and knives in addition to pipes, looms, musical instruments, and various non-essential impedimenta, including objects manufactured from metal, wood, glass, ceramics, plastic, leather, and textiles (Cribb 1991a: 70-74). Miragliuolo has characterized the bare essentials of mobile pastoral life

as falling into four categories: “containers, cooking implements, bedding, and a few tools” (1979: 214). Unfortunately, as Hole noted (1978: 166), pastoralism doesn’t require any specific tools and, as such, there is not likely to be any single artifact or class of artifact that is diagnostic of nomadic pastoralism. Furthermore, it has been often noted that among ethnohistorical analogues, many of these items are themselves the products of sedentary modern societies. Two challenges confront the archaeologist, then, in terms of the implications these observations have for the signature of mobile pastoralists in the archaeological record of the Syrian EBA. How might observations drawn from these analogues apply to an EBA technological context and, given their similarity to the contemporary sedentarists, can they serve to distinguish mobile pastoralists from either sedentarists or mobile hunter-gatherers at that time?

Extrapolating backward into the EBA some obvious adaptations to the above list of household goods would have to be made. On the simplest level, this means that any items manufactured of glass and plastic, if the need for such objects were to still exist in the past, would have to have been made from other materials, whether that be wood, fiber, metal, stone, or ceramics. Wood and fiber are unlikely to preserve in the archaeological record, while metal is likely to have been too valuable to be commonly deposited in the first place. Stone and ceramics, then, are the primary materials that will remain, to the extent that they were used. This also means ancient materials would have been heavier and bulkier, and therefore more difficult to transport, and in some cases also more fragile. Together this buttresses ethnohistorical observations that, in pre-modern periods, mobile pastoral groups got by with fewer material goods altogether (e.g. Hole 1978: 148; Stark 1933: 251). Ethnoarchaeological survey has also suggested that the

domestic sites of mobile pastoral groups contain a lower density of artifacts than sedentary cultivators (Cribb 1991a: 133), and are less visible as a result (Chang and Koster 1986: 126; contra Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992: 195-198, but note the likelihood of increasing access to durable goods since the Industrial Revolution). Hole argued that the lithic tool kits of contemporary pastoralists, agriculturalists, and even hunter-gatherers might not be appreciably different, because of overlapping activities: “Herders frequently require sickles for reaping, axes for cutting wood, and knives when they do butcher animals or shear them” (1978: 166). The same observation might be made of hunting, which, by all ethnographic accounts, is an activity pastoralists commonly engage in both for sport and dietary supplement.

Turning to ceramics, the twentieth century opinions—often so maligned—that mobile pastoral peoples are likely to leave few if any traces of material culture in the archaeological record were based, at least in part, on the assumption that such groups had no use for pottery, and had no practical means by which to transport it. Accumulating ethnohistorical information suggests, though, that despite the difficulties inherent in combining a mobile lifestyle with heavy, fragile ceramic pots, this is actually far from the case (Arnold 1985: 110-124). Eerkens (2008) noted five specific technical and logistical conflicts to the use and production of pottery by mobile hunter-gatherer populations, but his observations are largely relevant to mobile pastoralists as well. The presence of ceramic material at a mobile campsite, then, carries with it certain behavioral implications—how and why might a mobile society overcome these difficulties? The first two difficulties Eerkens identified relate to the transportation of ceramic containers, which are likely to be heavier, bulkier, and more fragile than alternative materials

manufactured from animal skins or fibers. Third, mobile individuals would have to remain stationary long enough to see through the production of pottery, a process that can take from days to weeks. Fourth, pottery production is often best suited to the beginning of the dry season, which is usually coterminous with the period of most intense harvesting and gathering activities, which one can assume were important subsistence activities for pastoralists making use of diverse sources of subsistence. Finally, one major advantage that pottery manufacture has over the production of other containers is an economy of scale. As the number of pots fired in one event increases, the amount of fuel necessary to fire them does not increase in a linear fashion. Eerkens suggested that, when combined with small population sizes for hunter-gatherers, this offers no advantage (2008: 309-310). By extension to mobile pastoralists, dry-season camp populations may not necessarily be any larger than those of hunter-gatherers, but at the same time ethnohistorical analogues suggest that production is carried out, nevertheless, only on a household level, involving, at most, the productive labor of three or perhaps four generations.

There are a number of strategies that mobile people might employ to overcome these problems. Drawing from the example of late prehistoric period pottery in the Western Great Basin region of the American Southwest, a place and period where the presence of mobile groups is well documented in the archaeological record (Ruff 1999: 320), Eerkens suggested that problems of portability may be attenuated to a certain extent by pack animals, but he also suggested caching as a possible practice (2008: 313). In the event that a group can anticipate its movements, heavy, cumbersome, or fragile pots could be stored away for use the next season. This implies, of course, that the same

group is returning to the same cache, be it along a migratory route or at a specific campsite (Eerkens 2008: 316). The latter strategy seems unlikely for free-ranging mobile pastoralists who, though they may restrict movements to within a certain territory or eco-zone, are not as bounded to their migratory schedule and route as are many contemporary analogues, such as the Basseri. It is also possible, as Eerkens suggests in the case of the Western Great Basin (2008: 317), that one subset of a mobile group might travel ahead of the rest of the group to prepare ceramic material ahead of time to be ready for a period of anticipated need. This assumes, however, that the rest of the group can get by without the labor of their fellows for however long it takes to prepare the ceramics. One solution to the difficulties involved in the production of ceramic material is simply to avoid it altogether and trade for ceramics with sedentary populations or traveling specialists. In terms of the scalability of ceramic production, although it seems clear that mobile pastoral households, especially those belonging to segmentary lineage systems, are largely independent in terms of their production and consumption, the formation of camp groups nevertheless demonstrates the importance of coordination as a labor-saving strategy. It is not inconceivable that pottery might be produced independently by a household, but then fired by the entire community in one event in a collective bonfire or kiln.

Despite assertions that the material culture of contemporary mobile pastoral analogues is not very different from contemporary sedentary societies (Hole 1974: 235)—an assertion that is more likely to be true the more that a mobile group acquires its material culture from sedentary societies, especially if that material is produced only with sedentary needs in mind—there are real reasons to expect that the pots of mobile pastoral

peoples will exhibit qualitative differences from those of contemporary sedentarists, especially if these pots were produced by the mobile peoples themselves. First, as Eerkens suggested, the pottery made by mobile peoples should be expected to have been made quickly, lacking much decoration or exterior treatment, and perhaps being asymmetrical or uneven. One of the most time-consuming aspects of pottery making, also, is the drying process between shaping forms and firing them. Therefore, pots would have been thinner, would have had roughened exteriors, and would have included more fiber temper to encourage faster drying (2008: 317-318). At the same time, though, thinner walls suggest better pottery-making technology and require more effort than thicker-walled vessels. There may also be other practical considerations relating to wall thickness, including heat efficiency and conductivity. Therefore, wall thickness alone may be a poor indicator. Mobile made pottery should also be expected to “contain finer temper and be less diverse in size and shape,” (Eerkens 2008: 318). Furthermore, the pots of mobile groups are more likely to have been fired at a low temperature and to show evidence of having been mended or repaired (Eerkens 2008: 320). Compared to sedentary pottery corpora, then, those of mobile origin are likely to have been comparatively simpler. In addition, they are very likely to have been hand-made and to have been unevenly fired (Miragliuolo 1979: 218-219). Cribb suggested that “large items such as cooking pots, storage jars or bowls might be expected to remain on particular sites as fixtures and to sustain a much higher rate of breakage or abandonment and incorporation into archaeological context,” relative to smaller and more portable ceramic items that are more likely to travel from site to site (1991a: 76). Mobile pastoral campsites, then, would be characterized by sherds generally only from large and small



vessels, especially because cooking pots have a short use-life, and so, “depending on the extent of use of pots as fixtures, we might find a size distribution skewed towards the upper or lower end of the range” (Cribb 1991a: 76). Concerning the lower end of that range, Miragliuolo, citing Shaffer (1972), pointed out that “A large proportion of the vessels represented on a pastoral nomadic site would be likely to display Shaffer's ‘constricted orifice.’ Deep, small-mouthed vessels would be more useful for nomads for holding milk and water” (1979: 218). Lindsay and Dean suggested that continued sheep traffic over archaeological sites is a process that “destroys walls, alters stratigraphic relationships, and reduces pot sherds to thumbnail size” (1971: 114). Although the effects of this traffic might have been exaggerated in their study of sites in the Long House Valley of Northeastern Arizona due to the constricted nature of the topography, Miragliuolo nevertheless cited this phenomenon as according well with the results of her survey of Baluchistan: “At the site of Dahang... for instance, most sherds were less than 30 mm across, and many ceramic ‘chips’ of less than 5 mm were discarded” (1979: 219). Banning and Köhler-Rollefson argued from ethnohistorical examples that mobile peoples had no use for flat bases to their pots, as they typically balance cooking pots on rocks over fires, hang pots from tent poles, or attach by ropes or nets for suspension from pack animals (1992: 192-193). Their point is well taken, but any expectation of a rounded base must be tempered by the assumption that construction methods will have been crude and a mobile population building up vessels by hand might have had a considerably easier time constructing flat bases. Eerkens, for instance, reported that hand-made pottery from the Western Great Basin region is often constructed by building coils up on top of a flat disc base (2008: 311). Microscopic and radiographic techniques also show

potential in distinguishing between ceramic material produced by mobile groups as opposed to sedentary ones. Simms and Bright (1997: 786) have suggested that sites associated with high mobility will show a greater variety of clay and temper sources relative to sites associated with a lower degree of mobility for the simple reason that more sources of raw materials are encountered by more mobile groups.

One well-known and widely discussed possible instance of a “nomadic” ceramic corpus in the Old World is the so-called “Negbite,” “Negebite,” or “Negevite” (Amiran 1969: 300; Pratico 1985: 23) ware known from the Negev Desert in the southern Levant, dating in its appearance from the EBA to the Early Islamic period. The corpus is characterized by crude construction techniques. Woolley and Lawrence, the first to publish the ware, described it as “thin and very hard, of gritty clay, hand-made and baked in an open hearth, red on the outer faces, and black or grey in the section” (1914-1915: 23). To the silty clay making up the matrix of the ware was added “chopped straw or grazers’ dung which, after firing, left impressions of the vegetal material as elongated voids in the matrix” (Haiman and Goren 1992: 148). In terms of their form,

The commonest type is a cylindrical vessel with a flat base and a simple holemouth rim. The sides are vertical, forming a straight angle with the base, or sloping slightly inwards. There is often a textile (Sheffer 1976) or a mat impression on the base, and the vessel surface is covered with finger marks. Plain, crude knob or ledge handles are sometimes attached to the sides.

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Interpretations of the function of these most commonly identified vessels diverges, but the best interpretation seems to be that they served as cooking pots. Haiman and Goren noted that the vegetal inclusions would have served this purpose well, interrupting cracks forming as a result of thermal stress (1992: 149). Negebite forms, however, also commonly include bowls, and less often jars and cups (Pratico 1985: 23), but the

presence of vegetal tempers, either dung-derived or otherwise, has not been addressed. Originally, this ware was thought to be limited to the Iron Age, but excavations and surveys carried out in the last three decades have demonstrated small quantities of similar forms with identical wares (Haiman and Goren 1992: 148), dating from EBA II, MBA I, Iron Age (IA) II and Islamic period sites (Haiman and Goren 1992: 143; Meshel 2002: 286-87). The Negebite corpus is fairly congruent with what would be expected of a pottery corpus from a mobile society. It is crude, hand constructed, and unevenly fired, while being relatively thin, durable, and seemingly represented primarily by cooking vessels in the archaeological record, whether that is representative of the use of the wares, or simply the result of preservation bias. Most recent commentators feel safe in assuming that this ware was the product of mobile pastoral communities because of its crudeness and its apparent geographical restriction to the Negev. In 1960, Aharoni et al. stated: “It may be conjectured that the vessels were the work of nomad potters, who, being constantly on the move... could not make use of the more highly developed instruments of their craft” (100). Similarly, Haiman and Goren were convinced of this by the conservatism of the production methods of Negebite ware from the EBA through the Islamic period, that it was produced by amateur potters (1992: 149), and by the distribution of the pottery type in the Negev—especially in the Byzantine and early Islamic periods—when the ware “is not recorded in sites other than small, temporary settlements” (1992: 145). It is nevertheless interesting to note that the ware is best represented from the Iron Age ‘fortresses’ of the Negev, the function and origin of which are the subject of some debate. In these places it consistently co-occurs with ‘imported’ wheel-made pottery forms. Most commentators are of the opinion that these sites

represent some sort of sedentarization process among mobile pastoralists native to the Negev (cf. Meshel 2002: 283). Recently, the discovery of Negebite vessels, many imitating wheel-made forms, was made at the site of Ḥorvat Shimon in the western Shephelah, in a much different ecological context. This has led Dagan to argue, based on the suddenly expanded range of Negebite forms, that “the phenomenon of handmade vessels should apparently be understood as representing the production of cheap utilitarian vessels in rural environments” (2011: 213). This conclusion seems hasty, though, especially without archaeometric analyses and given the unique character of the Shephelah finds, but it does demonstrate the difficulty of identifying Negebite ware with any particular consistent feature of life in the southern Levant from the EBA through the Islamic period other than ‘rurality’ and an emphasis on function rather than form.

Another corpus, which might be a possible “exception that proves the rule,” is the well-finished and distinctively decorated Eastern Desert Ware (EDW), found throughout the arid area in southern Egypt and the northern Sudan, between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea and dating between the fourth and sixth centuries AD. This area is historically attested as having played host to mobile pastoral groups at that time, as it does today. Like Negebite ware, EDW is hand-made and is characterized by its thin walls and relative hardness (Strouhal 1984: 157). The ware is distinguished by its fine-grain paste, lack of inclusions and “a layer of quality slip, either uniformly of a red-brown, light brown or grey colour, or in contrasting combinations of light brown and bright red areas” with incised geometric shapes and lines (Strouhal 1984: 157). Although it is possible that this pottery could have been manufactured by specialists for trade with mobile pastoralists, archaeometric analysis has ruled out the Nile Valley as the origin of this

ware (Barnard 2008: 418-419). Barnard has recently suggested, through experimentation, that the production of EDW directly by mobile pastoralists was “eminently possible” (2008: 432). He pointed out that one reason EDW may contradict the expectation that mobile group produced pottery should be poorly finished and undecorated may be because its origin in the fourth century AD had to do with a situation of increasing sedentism among mobile pastoralists, at least seasonally (2008: 434-435). In fact, the sorts of small, constricted forms anticipated among mobile groups are largely lacking in the EDW corpus, possibly due to increased sedentism of the producers or consumers, if these were different groups. Nevertheless, in Barnard's opinion EDW is a “special case,” and “may indicate that the production of pottery less recognizable than Eastern Desert Ware may have been more common among mobile groups than is usually suggested” (2008: 415-416).

These two examples suggest that, at the very least, rural populations in arid regions, and likely mobile to a great extent, were capable of producing pottery. However, both studies also suggest that some degree of sedentism is an important factor in the decision to manufacture ceramic pots in the first place. Questions of cultural preference and technological know-how aside, then, the issue of whether or not any group would manufacture pottery, sedentary or mobile, is likely to depend on an issue of relative convenience. Is it more convenient to avoid ceramic technology or to engage in it? Or put another way, is it more inconvenient to spend the time and effort seeing the pottery production process through from beginning to end, or to simply store liquids in skins, cook on open fires, and serve food from perishable materials? Additionally, did cultural or religious factors influence decisions to consciously adopt or avoid ceramic containers?

The answer to that question is likely to depend on a number of factors, from the accessibility and suitability of clay sources to different food sources and the culinary technology necessary to process those sources. For instance, Eerkens noted that pottery in the Western Great Basin is typically found cached in lowland areas, where seeds were a major food source and, furthermore, that around 1350 AD, a period of increased ceramic utilization, there was also substantial evidence for an increase in the consumption of small seeds. He hypothesized that pots would have been a more efficient means of boiling seeds than stone boiling in baskets, thus explaining the increased utilization of pottery technology at that time (2008: 320).

The principle of convenience, especially related to food processing, offered here for the explanation of why mobile groups may or may not invest in pottery technology is not contradicted by the observation that contemporary analogues make wide use of industrially produced, light, durable, and relatively cheap cooking, storage, and serving vessels. These objects fulfill all the requirements of a nomadic lifestyle by being easily portable, affordable, and easily replaceable. These objects, then, are relatively convenient and there is a low threshold of need that must be crossed for contemporary mobile pastoralists to employ these items. The question of whether or not they would seek to replace them with indigenously produced ceramic materials is largely hypothetical and difficult to address—like most ethnoarchaeological questions. Nevertheless, the extent to which the lack of these items would inconvenience the lives of these contemporary analogues, and thereby indirectly the extent to which it might be expected that ancient subject societies might have produced ceramic material, and precisely what sorts of vessels, can be indirectly queried through an analysis of how

contemporary groups use these vessels, and how integral they are in daily food processing tasks. It is acknowledged that there are many possible complicating factors in such an analysis, but I maintain that such an analysis is not without merit.

Unfortunately, most ethnographic accounts preserve very little of the fine resolution of daily life that is needed to undertake such a study. Salzman's account of the Sarhadi Baluch, however, stands in contradiction to this observation. Salzman reported that the standard meal of the Sarhadi Baluch centered on a dish called *hatuk*, which "consisted of an edible liquid into which bread was broken and that the bread would absorb" (2000: 70). *Hatuk* came in five varieties depending on the precise ingredients, including meat, spices, and the specific liquid medium. It was often served family style, from a communal bowl (2000: 71), which served dual purpose for both cooking and serving (2000: 78). Unfortunately, Salzman did not report what material this bowl was manufactured from. The leavened wheat bread made by the Sarhadi Baluch was typically prepared by spreading dough on a shallow, concave iron disk which was then placed, dough-side down, on an iron that had been heated in hot coals, although another variety could be prepared simply by covering dough in hot ashes (2000: 72). Dairy products were also an important part of the Sarhadi Baluch diet. Milk might be drunk raw, soured, cultured into yogurt, churned into butter, or dried into milk solids. Most of this processing was done in a sheepskin bag (2000: 73-74). Dates, also an important part of the diet, were stored in sheep- and goatskin bags (2000: 75). Additionally, the Sarhadi Baluch made use of "handleless pots with tight-fitting covers for dough" and dried milk solids (2000: 78). The impression left is that, except perhaps for tea, the Sarhadi Baluch could have gotten by without any ceramic implements at all, except for the cooking and

serving of the *hatuk*, which would have required a large bowl of a fireproof material. It would be possible, however, for a tightly woven basket with the rock boiling technique to have served this purpose.

Aspects of this comprehensive description echo the observations of other ethnographers. Marx related that the diet of Negev Bedouin in the late 1950s and early 1960s consisted of “a porridge made of bread soaked in liquid fat and water,” though he did not elaborate on food preparation techniques, utensils, or storage conventions (1967: 26-27). Barth had little to say about the diet of the Basseri during his time among them, other than that dairy products were a staple food and lamb and goat skins were used as containers for dairy products and water (1961: 8). Some of the earliest ethnographic works record food service and preparation in great detail. G. W. Murray, for instance, noted the primary role played by grain, including barley, wheat, maize, and rice, dairy products, lentils, and dates in the diet of Negev Bedouin. The grain was either made into a porridge, which was boiled with milk or water, or kneaded into bread which was baked either on a griddle or covered in hot ashes (1935: 85-86). He related that the usual method for cooking game or mutton is to make a hole in the ground, line it with rocks, and build a fire. Once the rocks have been thoroughly heated, the animal is placed inside and the oven is covered so that the radiant heat may cook it (1935: 88-89). During feasts, though, “a lamb, which has been boiled in fat, may be served whole on a gigantic wooden platter, bathed in melted butter and surrounded with rice, on a pile of bread and sometimes vegetables” (1935: 89). Unfortunately, Murray did not report specifically on the sorts of utensils used, but it seems likely that metal pots were available to these Bedouin during the time of his study and would have been convenient, though



unnecessary for the preparation of their ‘daily bread’. In fact, one may conclude that given the similar food habits of all of the above mobile pastoral groups, ceramic technology would have been of moderate to significant convenience, especially to the extent that grains were made into a porridge instead of bread, but ceramics would also have been seemingly unnecessary. These ethnohistorical analogues were, and are, freed from such a decision by the availability of widely available modern metal, plastic, and ceramic wares, facilitating deep-fried whole-lamb feasts.

It is difficult to draw any conclusion about the relationship between mobile pastoralism and the presence of ceramic technology in the archaeological record. Contemporary and ancient diets may have been significantly different, or specific climatological, ecological, or geological conditions might have conspired either to increase or decrease the feasibility and convenience of ceramic manufacturing. What the above analysis does suggest, though, is that the choice to produce ceramic material is likely to be related more to the logistical constraints of the process and considerations of mobility in the above cases than to any issue of necessity. This conclusion compares well with the cases of Negebite Ware and Eastern Desert Ware, suspected to be the material remains of people from a mobile pastoral background, produced during periods of increasing sedentism. This also suggests, though, that though ancient pastoral nomads could have made and used ceramic material, it is just as likely that they did not. If they were to use ceramic technology at all, it is most likely to have been in the production of cooking vessels, where it would seemingly offer the most return for time and effort invested in its production.

## *Architecture*

The architectural remains of segmentary lineage societies are, like artifactual remains, best studied by initial recourse to ethnohistorical studies of mobile pastoral societies. Such studies demonstrate that, although architectural remains may be ephemeral or even effectively invisible in some places during some periods (e.g. Smith 2008), mobile pastoral groups can and often do leave behind architectural traces of their campsites in the archaeological record (e.g. Ur and Hammer 2009).

The domestic architecture of all mobile groups shares in common the following requirements and limitations. First, it must be light enough to travel with, or else simple and fast enough to construct every time the campsite is moved. Second, it must also be able to contend with whatever weather conditions exist, in whatever region, at whatever season it is inhabited. In other words, like mobile pastoral ceramics and household artifacts, mobile pastoral architecture must be both efficient and convenient for a mobile lifestyle. The implication to be drawn from these requirements is one that has been largely borne out by ethnohistorical observation: sites of longer occupation, usually during the wet season, will tend to show greater amounts of architectural elaboration, while more transitory, briefly occupied sites will be less effected. The more transitory mobile pastoral camps, then, are more likely to go unnoticed by the archaeologist.

The domestic architecture of most ethnohistorically known mobile pastoral groups falls into two broad classes: tensile and framed structures. Tensile structures are those which, in the common vernacular, might most often be referred to as ‘tents’. They are characterized by one or more poles simultaneously supporting, and being held in place by, some sort of natural or man-made cloth, anchored into the ground by guy lines. The

use of the term tensile to describe these structures comes from the fact that it is the tension placed on the roof material that holds supporting poles in place. This form of tent has historically predominated in the Middle East and North Africa, where it is best known in the form of the ‘black tent,’ being most often covered by fabric manufactured from goat hair. Under Roger Cribb’s definition of ‘tent’ as “a prefabricated structure consisting of a flexible covering and structural supports temporarily brought together to form an integrated architectural unit,” (1991a: 85) it would also be possible to include structures where a covering is draped over a rigid, free-standing frame. The most common form of framed tent encountered ethnographically is the *topak ev*. It has a circular ground plan, with a central, circular support on top where the supporting side ribs are anchored together. Some sort of material, often either felt or matting, is then draped over or fastened to the frame. The central Asian *yurt* is essentially an elongation of the *topak ev*, being barrel-vaulted and rectangular in shape and having a single central beam that unites the side ribs, instead of a circular support. These tent forms predominate in the Central Asian steppes but are found also in the Middle East. Other forms exist as well, which are technically all subsets of the framed tent type, but are more associated with groups that use tensile structures (Andrews 1997: 257). One form is the tunnel tent, or what Andrews calls the ‘bender’ (1997: 258). The bender is constructed of semi-circular supports, bent to span the entire width of a rectangular floor plan, supported by horizontal beams and then draped with a covering. In principle, this construction technique does not differ from the traditional reed houses of the southern Iraqi marshes, the existence of which is demonstrated on cylinder seals dating back at least to the end of the Uruk period (e.g. Hamilton 1967). One possible tent-plan that might correspond to a

bender-type structure is known from the Deh Luran plain, dating to the Uruk period (Wright 1981: 78). Another form that is referred to sometimes as a *kula* is essentially an arbor, where vertical poles support tree and bush branches, as opposed to a cloth covering. This form is not as water resistant as goat-hair textiles, but is considerably cooler and, for this reason, is sometimes used during the hottest months by groups that otherwise employ a tensile structure or a bender.

Opinions differ on the antiquity of all of these tent types, though generally not in the understanding of their regions of origin. The Central Asian types are so described because they are understood to be functionally specialized to that climate, being “designed for protection against cold and strong winds rather than rain...” (Cribb 1991a: 86). By contrast, “due to the properties of [goat-hair] and the nature of construction, the black tent is well designed for protection against both heat and rain” (1991a: 87), making them ideal abodes for relatively warmer and sometimes wetter climates in Southwest Asia. Central Asian types are attested at least as far back as the fourth century BC (Andrews 1997: 25). The antiquity of the black tent, though, is widely disputed, with Rosen and Saidel (2010) recently arguing, as noted above, that it did not come into existence until the appearance of the domesticated dromedary camel, at least in the Negev. Andrews, however, argued that the bender possibly pre-dates both the black tent and the Central Asian types. He based this argument on the following observations. First, the bender is attested in areas where both these other types presently predominate. Second, despite structural similarities between cultures, there is no shared terminology for its features, indicating ancient adoption and assimilation. “Thirdly, it appears in several cases as an alternative, cheaper tent type used by a group in association with a

more developed type...” (Andrews 1997: 257). Furthermore, Andrews followed Ferdinand (1959: 46) in arguing for an evolutionary relationship between the bender and the black tent. Such a relationship could be significant owing to the observation that “within tents of rectangular or elliptical plan, the internal arrangement of household possessions and activities is remarkably consistent” (Cribb 1991a: 100), and bears further analysis of the features of such rectangular tent types. It is, of course, possible that ancient pastoralists utilized any of these forms, or other forms of temporary shelter not ethnographically attested, and that they switched between forms seasonally. Nevertheless, the shared requirements and limitations of both ethnohistorical analogues and ancient subjects are likely to produce significant architectural similarities of function and preservation, if not precisely of form.

The archaeological implications of tent structure and superstructure following from the above descriptions alone are not extensive. All that might be expected for any of the above cases would be post-holes at best, and perhaps cooking hearths (e.g. de Schauensee 1968: 37). Ethnohistorical studies of mobile pastoral architecture, however, have suggested that more enduring features are sometimes associated with the ephemeral wooden poles and natural fiber roofs and walls of mobile pastoral campsites. The most commonly reported are likely to be stone outlines of tents, the stones being used to weigh down the tent covering (Hole 1978: 151; Miragliuolo 1979: 223; Simms 1988: 202; Avni 1992: 245), or provide low walls (Salzman 2000: 31; Ur and Hammer 2009: 41-42), though Cribb also cited some reports of substantial stone walls used in connection with tent architecture (1991a: 95-96). Walls serve to keep out wind and rain in the wet season, a task also sometimes performed by reed mats, plastered with mud (Faegre 1979: 51). In

rockier landscapes, tent sites are prepared by removing stones from the area enclosed by the tent (Faegre 1979: 20; Simms 1988: 203; Wendrich 2008: 536), also leading to a recognizable signature of tent sites (Banning 1993). Tent sites are also sometimes associated with leveled floors, especially when tents are pitched on a slope (Faegre 1979: 20; Cribb 1991a: 95). Sometimes, shallow depressions or channels are also found around the outsides of tents, possibly intended to channel water away from the tent (Avni 1992: 245; Cribb 1991a: 95). Not unexpectedly, hearths are frequently reported at mobile pastoral campsites, sometimes hearths both internal and external to the tent are encountered, often in pits (Barth 1961: 12), and sometimes with walls to protect against wind (Cribb 1991a: 92). Stone platforms and benches are also often encountered, intended to provide a dry surface for the storage of textiles, bedding, and foodstuffs (de Schauensee 1968: 36-37; Hole 1978: 151-52; Simms 1988: 203; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992: 195; Ur and Hammer 2009: 42). Such platforms need not necessarily be stone, however, and Salzman (2000: 30) recorded the use of wooden platforms among the Baluch. Storage structures of different types, both bins and pits, have also been attested (Hole 1978: 154; Avni 1992: 246; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992: 195). Corrals are also sometimes encountered, being composed of walls constructed of rock or brush (Eldar et al. 1992: 211; Avni 1992: 245; Ur and Hammer 2009: 42), sometimes with a covering, though it is often noted that portions of domestic tents sometimes serve as corrals (e.g. Salzman 2000: 25). More enigmatic structures are also sometimes attested. Hole, for instance, noted “an open shelter, consisting of three walls, at some distance from the tent sites” that men used as meeting places (1978: 152), while Banning and

Köhler-Rollefson (1992:189) cited the use of narrow canyon rock-piled walls as day-shelters built by shepherd boys, or corrals used to separate lactating goats from kids.

The presence of some or all of these features could be indicative of a mobile pastoral campsite. Unfortunately, the creation and preservation of these features are dependent on a number of different variables. First, the extent to which materials are preserved will depend in no small degree upon what construction materials are employed. An emphasis on stone architecture in a rocky landscape has positive connotations for archaeological preservation, while the use of wooden platforms, as among the Baluch, diminishes archaeological visibility. Second, it has been noted that mobile pastoral investment in longer-term architectural features, such as walls, corrals, and storage structures are dependent upon the expected length of stay at a given campsite (Cribb 1991a: 110; e.g. Ur and Hammer 2009: 51). Therefore, it is most likely that wet season campsites, being a period of relative sedentism among ethnohistorically-attested mobile societies, are likely to be more extensive and, therefore, more visible in the material record. At the same time, weatherproofing is often emphasized during the wet season, reinforcing the construction of durable architectural features (Chang and Koster 1986: 112). More transitory camps might not even see the tent fully erected, or might see it disregarded in favor of the cooler *kula*, constructed entirely of perishable, natural plant fibers, before the household is moved again in a matter of days. In these cases, only the remains of hearths or post-holes will indicate the presence of a transitory occupation.

Roger Cribb devised a typology of nomadic dwelling forms that seeks to divide this continuum into seven different stages of archaeological visibility. The first four forms are characteristic of both bedouin black tents, benders, and the Central Asian types. They

run the gamut from preserving only postholes to consisting of low walls high enough that “the tent itself serves as a temporary roof over this structure and side flaps or wickerwork screens may be dispensed with. In plan the structure will closely resemble a permanent dwelling” (1991a: 105). Types five through seven are essentially permanent structures, which might more properly be called ‘houses’, with roof structures of increasing degrees of permanence (1991a: 106). Such an investment in architectural elaboration suggests one or more of the following: (1) that the mobile group in question has to contend with difficult winters, (2) that construction materials are nearby and plentiful, (3) that the group has a long seasonal or multi-seasonal period of sedentism, and (4) that the group returns consistently to the same residential location. Cribb noted that the latter condition could suggest a form of ownership or private property (1991a: 110), which conflicts with the explanation of segmentary lineage systems developed in Chapters 2 and 3, or simply indicate harsh winters, especially at high altitudes (1991a: 134). It is, therefore, worth exploring in more detail some of the examples of ‘nomads’ that Cribb cited as alternating between tent structures in the dry season and structures of types five, six, and seven in the wet season, in order to determine whether or not segmentary lineage societies or structural aspects thereof, also correlate with the use of these more permanent structures.

One group that inhabited summer domiciles corresponding to Cribb’s type five structures, in which built walls support a portable superstructure, was the Kosan Kabile, a subgroup of the Beritan of eastern Anatolia. As Cribb explained, this group also owned its own summer pastures, whereas other groups, which rented their pastures, only constructed “the bare minimum of storage platforms and hearths though all groups spend much of the same length of time in the same place” (1991a: 110). The mixed Lur and



Kurd population of the Hulailan Valley was also recorded as inhabiting type five structures, which they called *zemga*, in this case during the wet, winter season after the fall plowing and sowing, but before the spring fallow plowing and harvesting (Edelberg 1966-67: 381-84). The residents of the Hulailan Valley, as they were encountered by Edelberg and Feilberg, however, were agro-pastoralists who sharecropped some land and owned some plots themselves (Edelberg 1966-67: 378). Unfortunately, the sociopolitical nature of this group has not been adequately reported to comment on the presence of any segmentary lineage structures. It is worth pointing out, however, two implications of this analysis. First, dwellings of the fifth type in Hulailan co-occur with cultivation and private ownership of land, two practices that contradict a segmentary lineage system. Second, despite their non-segmentary lineage nature, the inhabitants of the Hulailan Valley still resided for part of the year in tensile, goat-hair tents that fit the description of other mobile pastoral groups offered above (Edelberg 1966-67: 384-89). Although the history of these peoples is not known, it is possible that they were recorded here in a post-segmentary lineage condition. Nevertheless this demonstrates that although segmentary lineage societies might be correlated to a strong degree with temporary shelters, and negatively correlated with more permanent sorts of architecture, abandoned campsites alone are not adequate indicators of segmentary lineage or even, necessarily, post-segmentary lineage sociopolitical structures. They might also characterize shifting agriculturalists, or even hunter-gatherer groups.

### *Settlement Patterns*

As has been demonstrated above, there is a high degree of cross-cultural similarity in the form and pattern of mobile pastoral architecture, relating not to any particular inherited aesthetic inclination, but to a more fundamental force: the simple material requirements of mobile pastoral production on the most fundamental subsistence unit in the society—the individual household (cf. Cribb 1991b: 377). Because of these requirements, diverse populations of mobile pastoralists share similar concerns that pattern the spatial relationships between households within a campsite, and in the relationship between camp groups and their environment. Although the form and pattern of these relationships on the ground may differ, they are nevertheless governed by similar concerns, requirements, and considerations, which can serve as an archaeological signature for mobile pastoralism, and, by extension, segmentary lineage systems. It is important to note, however, that the operation of similar concerns in different contexts can yield different results, which may be ambiguous as to subsistence practices. Nevertheless, by examining the function of such concerns among ethnohistorical analogues, making the spatial system explicit and determining the cause and effect of shared principles, this ambiguity may be attenuated to some degree. Furthermore, such a system could aid in a landscape approach to the study of ancient mobile pastoral societies, for instance through integration with a Geographical Information System (GIS).

The pattern of activities taking place in and around the tent has been the subject of explicit ethnoarchaeological study and more casual ethnographic reporting. Cribb estimated that the basic requirements for space in a mobile pastoral camp for a single household is approximately ten meters by twenty meters, balancing opposing forces of

agglomeration and dispersal (1991a: 145). Simms' study of a Bedouin household in Petra shows that the entirety of activity areas of an individual 'black tent' measured fifteen meters long by four meters wide, agreeing well with Cribb's estimate, although the area of archaeological deposition related to this household was more extensive, perhaps on the order of thirty by forty-five meters, though becoming increasingly diffuse further away from the tent and its immediate external activity areas (e.g. 1988: 203-207, esp. fig. 3). The distances between tents are dependent upon economic and genetic relationships between households (cf. Salzman 2000: 61) and seem to range between ten and thirty meters (Cribb 1991a: 145).

Unlike the distances between tents, overall camp sizes range widely depending on ecological factors, especially those tied to seasonality, as well as political factors. The size of a camp, at any one time, will be primarily dependent on two variables: the amount and quality of pasture available and the size of household herds. This is because, as was pointed out in Chapter 3, a mobile pastoral camping group is essentially a herding group that pools labor resources and animals to manage the pasturing of herds as effectively as possible. As such, the tendency will be for the size of a camp group at any given time to reflect the relationships between these two variables. For this reason, camp group size will be sensitive to climatic variations, both seasonally and inter-annually. Nevertheless, tendencies for camp groups to reduce in size in periods of relative climatic stress can be overcome when there is a defensive need for a population to group together in greater numbers. Camp group sizes, then, being dependent on ecological and political context, and fluctuating seasonally, range widely and are difficult to characterize. Miragliuolo offered a good example of the sort of variation that can be expected among

ethnohistorical analogues, with her observation of Baluch campsites ranging from 1 to 25 tents, “depending on the duration of occupation, season of the year, quality of pasturage, and purpose of the camp” (1979: 202).

It is necessary now to unpack a number of archaeological implications that have accumulated in the course of this discussion thus far. First, although it might be tempting to infer seasonality from a mobile pastoral campsite on the basis of site size, to do so is actually a hazardous undertaking. Camp group size is based on the relationship between herd sizes and ecology, and it is not possible to control for either variable in the archaeological record. Furthermore, particularly large camp groups could exist in any season, especially if necessitated by the right political climate. Second, there are implications for site preservation. Larger camp groups are more likely to be encountered archaeologically, simply because they are more extensive. A twenty-five-tent camp group, with the average individual area per tent of ten by twenty meters as Cribb estimated, above, yields an approximate total campsite area of five thousand square meters, or approximately a half hectare. If the spaces between tents are larger, that estimate can grow to nearly one hectare (it is important to note, though, as will be discussed below, the pattern of tent layout on the ground will not necessarily be in a neat, compact, geometrical form). At the same time, larger camp groups are more likely to occur during the wet season, when mobile pastoral groups traditionally enjoy their greatest amount of sedentism and, as discussed above, are most likely to leave behind significant architectural remains. The result of these accumulated circumstances, then, is that large, cold/wet season camps are those which are most likely to be encountered

archaeologically. This phenomenon must be considered when analyzing mobile pastoral remains, especially on a regional level.

Just as shared concerns relating to mobile pastoralism tend to produce cross-culturally similar patterns of spatial organization within a tent site and campsite, ethnohistorical research demonstrates cross-cultural similarity in the patterning of campsite locations in a landscape on the basis of ecology and topography. Salzman cited some of the concerns relevant to the Sarhadi Baluch when deciding upon a campsite:

...the need for adequate pasture, the desire to avoid disease, the need for water, selection of herding personnel, avoidance of cultivated areas, the need to be near cultivated areas for agricultural labor and fertilization of the fields by the animals, and the desire to cement social relations. Also important were access to water, access to brush for firewood, the need to avoid fouled campsites, and the need to avoid overcrowding pasturelands.

*apud* Miragliuolo 1979: 195

Miragliuolo added, on the basis of her survey experience among the Baluch, preferences for flat surfaces, sandy surfaces, and protection from the wind (1979: 195-96).

Preferences for well-drained areas are well documented in the ethnohistorical literature (Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992: 186). While some researchers report a preference for flat surfaces, others note that slightly sloping surfaces will not be avoided altogether, and, furthermore, can have a pronounced influence on the shape of a campsite pattern (Cribb 1991a: 140-41). Wind, too, shapes both intra-site configuration and landscape patterning of campsites. Main entrances will generally be on the leeward side of a tent (Avni 1992: 245). Often this combination of factors can lead to a pattern whereby tents are arranged in long parallel lines (Cribb 1991a: 140-41). Many have noted a general preference for camp locations protected from wind altogether (Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1986: 160; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992: 186; Cribb 1991a: 140-41;

Eldar et al. 1992: 211; Avni 1992: 245; Rosen 1988: 48). Often this means pitching camps in *wadi* valleys, though mostly on terraces above the *wadi* beds, themselves (Havakook 1986: 84-85), or next to stone outcroppings (Marsden 1976: 14). During hot weather, however, higher places might be preferred, a breeze being a welcome respite from the heat of the day (Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992: 186). Speaking topographically, then, mobile pastoralists tend to prefer campsites that are inconspicuous, dry, relatively flat, and protected from wind. Cribb noted that “in more open country a grove of trees, a ruined building, an archaeological *tell* or relic of Roman, Byzantine, Sassanian or Seljuk architecture may provide at least a semblance of shelter” (1991a: 139). Avni noted that in the Negev Highlands these preferences tend to produce clusters of sites in ideal areas of occupation (1992: 245).

The proximity of natural resources such as water, pasture, and fuel are arguably of primary concern to mobile pastoralists. Cribb stated that the need for nearby wood and brush is important, citing that dung fuel must be dried—a lengthy process (1991a: 138). Miragliuolo, though, stressed that access to pasture, followed by access to water, were the two primary concerns in campsite location (Miragliuolo 1979: 195-96). Consideration of these criteria, then, in a GIS, might suggest likely locations for mobile pastoral campsites and provide substantial aid to survey efforts focused on the remains of campsites. Banning and Köhler-Rollefson (1996: 160-61), though, caution against this assumption, noting first that pastures varied both seasonally and annually and can be expected to be significantly different from contemporary pastures and, second, arguing that mobile pastoralists can range widely enough from water sources that they are “unrealistic foci of archaeological attention,” despite their own observations and those of Dickson (1951:

82), which they cite, that during the dry season these ranges would be on the order of from one to three kilometers.

This raises the question of how independent ethnohistorically-attested mobile pastoral groups actually are from permanent water sources, and how relevant this observation would be to the study of ancient subject societies. Cribb was of the opinion that observations relating to relative independence of camp locations from permanent sources of water are overstated, and that a nearby source of water is necessary for relatively stationary camps (1991a: 137-38), around a half kilometer away, according to his experience in Anatolia (1991a: 139). Salzman provided no distance measurements during his time among the Sarhadi Baluch but noted that during summer small stock were typically watered three times daily (2000: 100), also implying a very close, permanent water source, perhaps no more than five kilometers distant. It does seem, however, that during the cool, wet seasons, when camels do not require water and sheep, goat, and asses can persist for days without access to water, that campsites of ethnohistorically attested mobile pastoralists could range quite freely. Dickson reported that bedouin campsites in Kuwait during the early part of the twentieth century could range twenty to thirty miles from permanent water sources (1951: 82). Salzman, however, noted that the Sarhadi Baluch, during the winter, still watered their stock every other day (2000: 100). In that situation, such a distance would not be practical. Ethnohistorical reports of wider ranging groups seems to be attributable to the influence of either the camel, in hauling in water for both people and stock when necessary, donkey, or more modern means (e.g. Eldar et al. 1992: 209). Given that the range of sheep and goat in a single day is approximately twenty kilometers, and assuming that small stock would need to be milked

daily during at least part of the arid season, it seems safe to assume that pre-camel mobile pastoralists would not have been able to consistently range more than about ten kilometers from a water source that could supply both the humans and their stock with adequate hydration (Smith 1978: 85). The great irony for archaeologists, though, is that it is the summer camps, which are likely to move most frequently and leave behind the most meager archaeological traces, whose ranges are most limited and predictable, while longer term winter camps, more commonly associated with architecture, are potentially located much further from permanent water sources and therefore distributed over a much broader area. For instance, if summer camps were limited to a three kilometer distance from a water source, then a circle with a three kilometer radius around a well would encompass an area of just under thirty square kilometers, a not insurmountable survey area. A circle with a ten kilometer radius, however, corresponding to the wet season limit, would encompass over three hundred square kilometers. While winter camps would be more easily detectable on the basis of size and architectural extensiveness, they are likely to be spread out over a wider area.

Ancient mobile pastoral camps should be expected to follow similar patterns of intra- and inter-site variation. As Banning and Köhler-Rollefson have pointed out, though, ancient pasturelands might not be identifiable to any great degree of accuracy. Perennial water sources might be a stronger indicator of possible mobile pastoral activity areas, yet all but the most permanent of these, too, are likely to vary over the timescale of millennia. Even then, winter camps, likely to be the most visible, archaeologically, are also likely to be relatively autonomous from these sources of water. Ironically, then, it



may be just as easy to locate ancient sources of pasture and water through the identification of mobile pastoral camp sites than *vice versa*.

### *Human biomechanics of mobility*

Potentially one of the most important, and direct, sources of information relevant to mobility in ancient societies is derived from the skeletal remains of the ancient people themselves. Based on the principle of bone remodeling proposed by Wolff in 1892, it is now an accepted principle in the field of Biomechanics that differences in habitual behavior, including mobility, can be investigated through skeletal structural morphology (Endo and Kimura 1970; Amtmann 1971; Kimura 1971; Minns et al. 1975; Lovejoy et al. 1976; Pizial et al. 1980; Ruff and Hayes 1983; Bridges 1989; Ruff et al. 1993). Studies of archaeological and historical populations have demonstrated increasing circularity in long-bone diaphyseal shape, along with decreasing sexual dimorphism in lower limb robusticity (Ruff and Hayes 1983; Ruff 1987; Brock and Ruff 1988; Bridges 1989; Collier 1989; Benfer 1990; Fresia et al. 1990; Ruff and Larsen 1990; Kimura and Takahashi 1992; Ruff 1992; Larsen et al. 1995; Ruff 1999; Ledger et al. 2000; Stock and Pfeiffer 2001; Holt 2003; Weiss 2005; Marchi et al. 2006; Sládek et al. 2006; Stock 2006; Marchi 2008; Sparacello and Marchi 2008). These results have been shown to correlate with decreasing mobility and loading of the lower body that historically accompanied shifts in subsistence strategies (Ruff 1987; Bridges 1989; Collier 1989; Ledger et al. 2000; Stock and Pfeiffer 2001; Holt 2003; Weiss 2005; Marchi et al. 2006; Sládek et al. 2006; Stock 2006). More recently, further studies have demonstrated that the skeletal morphology of mobile pastoralists can be similar to that of hunter-gatherers, both being

distinguished, then, from sedentary agricultural populations (Marchi et al. 2006; Marchi 2008; Maggiano et al. 2008; Sparacello and Marchi 2008; Sparacello et al. 2010).

Although the influence of climate (Ruff 1994; Pearson 2000; Stock 2006), topography (Ruff 1999; Ruff 2000; Stock and Pfeiffer 2001; Pearson and Cordero 2004, Marchi et al. 2006; Pearson et al. 2006; Sparacello and Marchi 2008), body shape (Shaw and Stock 2010), and genetics (Karasik et al. 2009; Ma et al. 2009) are all known to affect this morphology, differences in activity levels between groups and individuals are nevertheless thought to approximate differences in mechanical loading, especially when these factors can be controlled (Ruff 1987; Ruff 2000; Stock and Pfeiffer 2001; Weiss 2003; Lieberman et al. 2004; Ruff et al. 2006a; Ruff et al. 2006b; Sparacello and Marchi 2008; Ma et al. 2009). Because EBA populations in Syria are expected to have generally inhabited the same landscape with similar topography, and are unlikely to have been separated by any great genetic distance, any variation in lower body long bone morphology from human remains in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia is likely to correlate with differences in behavior, especially relative differences in mobility. Although the relationship between mobility and specialized pastoralism in any single case cannot be known, comparisons between larger and more robust datasets can suggest specific trends in subsistence strategies.

Unfortunately, there are significant hurdles to be overcome in the application of this method to any archaeological sample. First, in order to control for body size, it is necessary that skeletons be relatively complete and discretely identifiable. Cemeteries dating to the Syrian EBA, especially in the Euphrates River valley, are known to have suffered from widespread looting. The period is also characterized by the use of

communal burial chambers that were characterized by the admixture of individual bones. Even then, the skeletal remains from undisturbed tomb contexts are often not particularly well preserved. Also, this method requires access to at least simple radiological capacities, such as an X-ray machine. Given the current situation of political unrest in Syria, where the vast bulk of the mortuary data still resides, such a study is not feasible at this time.

### **Material Correlates of Pastoralism**

As mentioned above, Hole (1978) has noted that pastoralism and its related daily activities do not require, and therefore do not preserve for the archaeologist, any characteristic tools or other artifacts. The bones of sheep and goat, however, herded for milk and wool, and slaughtered for their flesh, often do enter the archaeological record and testify to ancient practices of animal husbandry. In Neolithic periods in the Near East, the task falling to the faunal analyst is often simply to discriminate between assemblages that accumulated as the result of hunting behaviors that targeted the wild progenitors of domesticated sheep and goat and those assemblages resulting from purposeful animal husbandry and herding. In the context of this dissertation, confined to EBA Syria, the only sheep and goat encountered will be domesticated varieties, morphologically distinct from their wild counterparts (Zeder et al. 2006: 141), to some extent trivializing the effort to distinguish herded from hunted populations. Clearly, then, mobile pastoral communities will be associated with the remains of these domesticated animals, but as they are not unique in this respect—the presence of sheep and goat bones themselves only indicate the possibility of mobility. The presence of domesticated

animal remains at a site do not necessarily indicate that the individuals responsible for their deposit directly engaged in pastoral activities themselves. Such animals may have been acquired through trade or by force. Furthermore, there is good reason to believe that the preservation of such zooarchaeological remains on the temporary campsites of mobile pastoralists will not be well preserved. Other than the shallow and ephemeral nature of such sites, ethnoarchaeological research has documented the common dispersal of animal bones by dogs and other scavengers (Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1986: 164, 1992: 200; Simms 1988: 205; Redding 1981: 314). Banning and Köhler-Rollefson, for instance, in their survey of the Beidha area, noted that the larger bones of donkeys were frequently encountered while those of goats were underrepresented relative to their economic importance (1992: 200).

Faunal remains resulting from the herding activities of mobile pastoral peoples, however, may be more likely encountered in excavations of ancient *tells*, sites of relatively long-term permanent occupation, more commonly understood as sites of urban cities or city-states. Although sedentary, agricultural communities could clearly engage in their own animal husbandry endeavors and the existence of a market system suggests at the least the possibility of trade with mobile pastoral groups for animal goods—in this case, specifically meat. Attempts have been made in the past to distinguish between sedentary and nomadic sheep and goat on the basis of morphology and bone chemistry, though these have largely not met with success (Zeder 1978), but a recent stable isotope study of ovicaprid remains from Titriş Höyük has succeeded in establishing that faunal remains found there in the latter part of the EBA were pastured at some distance from the site (Trella 2010).

Mortality profiles of sheep and goat remains may also suggest possible strategies of herd management. Zeder is keen to promote the usefulness of such studies, arguing that “sheep and goat mortality profiles, in particular, play a central role in the examination of a wide range of problems, ranging from the transition from hunting to herding to the development of specialized pastoral economies” (Zeder 2006: 87). Historically, though, investigations of mortality profiles, including age, sex, and species ratios, are beset with many possible sources of bias, rendering most interpretations speculative at best, and, at worst, serving as an *ad hoc* reaffirmation of an original hypothesis. Ultimately, the goal of such an analysis is the reconstructions of ancient herd demographics, and the influence of human behavior on those demographics, to produce a particular population death profile, the character of which will depend upon the purpose to which the herd had been put. A number of assumptions must be made, however, before such an analysis can begin. First, one must assume that one is dealing with only one ‘herd,’ which is to say that all the animal remains recovered are the product of a single, heterogeneous demographic profile, culled with a single goal in mind. In reality, the death profile of a site might reflect the presence of herds with different demographic profiles, relating to different management principles and different economic purposes. Second, one must assume that the sample derived from a single annual cycle of herd management and that this cycle is representative of longer-term management strategies. If a sample accumulated over the course of many years, inter-annual variations in herd demographics, caused either by management strategies or ecological conditions may skew understandings of the mortuary profile. At the same time, if a sample was accumulated over the course of just one or two seasons it might be seriously affected by a

seasonal pattern of culling, and not represent an annual cycle of herd management.

Third, and related to the second point, one must assume that herd population size is relatively static. A growing or shrinking herd population will skew any understanding of an underlying demographic profile derived from mortuary profiles, to say nothing of the effects that a real fluctuating population might have on management strategies. Finally, there are a number of sources that can bias the relationship between the archaeological sample and the mortuary profile of the ancient herd other than ancient behavior, including the activity of scavengers mentioned above, but especially sampling and excavation bias. This is compounded to the degree that more of a site remains unexcavated and to the degree that certain skeletal elements or individuals belonging to the herd were removed from the site being excavated. These animals would have affected herd management decisions, without being preserved in the death profile of the site. Nearly all of these complications would be implicated in the study of a seasonal occupation of a mobile pastoral population, especially to the extent that it experienced inter-annual fluctuations in herd sizes, as is widely reported among ethnohistorically-attested mobile pastoral societies.

In the vein of the positivism that spread through archaeology in the 1960s and 70s, Roger Cribb, in the 1980s, developed a computer program to model herd growth and embraced a systems approach as a heuristic method for the investigation of herd mortuary profiles (1984, 1985, 1987). Cribb at that time was concerned with moving beyond the simple discrimination between wild and herded populations and towards an appreciation of “the full range of variability within the domestic category itself...” (1985: 75). As Cribb described his approach, he was not concerned with establishing demographic

profiles from age-at-death profiles. Potential sources of bias in deposition, excavation, and analysis led him to state that “the population parameters of the herd are therefore likely to be unknown and, to a large extent, unknowable” (1985: 77). In reality, his approach rested on the assumption that herd population parameters were, indeed, knowable. Cribb suggested that the mortuary profile of an archaeological sample, when it indicated a demographic profile that could not have been self-propagating, indicated the action of some biases. The job of the faunal analyst, then, was to determine with the aid of computer models what demographic profiles, accounting for various biases, might account for the sample age-at-death profile. In this way, Cribb stated, what faunal analysis can do is to tell us “about the cultural filter through which its remains have passed...” (1985: 81). The deficiencies in Cribb’s approach are many-fold. Leaving aside the accuracy of the assumptions built into the program, Cribb provided no way to discriminate between cultural and natural sources of bias. Thus his system, while encouraging speculation, does nothing to discriminate between speculative hypotheses, especially because speculation about a herd demographic profile underlays the entire approach. The ultimate *ad hoc* nature of this approach to the explication of archaeological samples can be seen in his case studies.

Although this particular brand of positivism does not characterize contemporary archaeozoologists, the *ad hoc* nature of interpretation of data relating to herd management strategies is still the norm. Although such speculation is often tempered by warnings of the difficulty of such interpretation and the possible sources of bias that might obscure the relationship between the archaeological sample and the ancient population, it nevertheless colors the academic discussions to a greater degree than is

justifiable given the difficult nature of the data. One brief example can suffice to demonstrate this point. In her 1991 book *Feeding Cities*, Melinda Zeder was concerned with analyzing the faunal remains from the ancient Iranian city of Malyan. In the book, Zeder focused primarily on data relating to the distribution of meat in different periods at Malyan to argue that highly specialized states have indirect meat distribution systems, as opposed to direct distribution, characterized by direct exchange between supplier and consumer. Despite the caveat that, “Management practices, while not entirely out of reach, can only be studied with care” (1991: 249), Zeder nevertheless offered poorly justified interpretations of such data. For instance, concerning the surprisingly high proportion of goat to sheep remains in the Banesh phase, approximately two to one—surprising owing to the fact that sheep are generally preferred in the relatively colder, wetter environment which characterizes Malyan (1991: 161)—Zeder suggested, on the basis of only two positive examples, that a predominance of goats suggests the presence of mobile pastoral producers (1991: 162-63). In fact, a supporting analogy may be found among the Sarhadi Baluch (Salzman 2008: 93), but, Zeder’s assumption contradicts two observed principles. First, that *sedentary* populations may also rely to a much greater extent on goats than sheep, all other factors being equal, owing to the fact that sedentary herds lead to overgrazing, a phenomenon which goats are far more adept at resisting, owing to their expanded diet (Redding 1981: 224, 260), and second, that goats are more efficient suppliers of brute protein than sheep—the macro-nutrient most often lacking in agricultural subsistence schemes (Redding 1981: 231). By this point I do not necessarily mean to argue that Zeder's assumed connection between goats and specialized pastoralism is wrong at Malyan during the Banesh period, but rather that it does not



discriminate between the herds of specialist or multi-resource herders, whether mobile or sedentary and agricultural. Although these speculations are not really integral to her larger argument, Zeder's interpretation of the mortuary data simply confirms her assumption that mobile pastoral groups existed in the area of Malyan at this time, an assumption of specialized production which neatly fits her thesis. Indeed, her assumption that goat production at Malyan in the Banesh period was carried out by a specialized mobile pastoral group is entirely possible, but her use of herd management data is speculative, *ad hoc*, verges on circular logic, and does not demonstrate the care in inferring management practices that she had initially advocated to her readers.

Redding (1981) has conclusively demonstrated that herd mortuary profiles are not useful means by which to distinguish between sedentary, primarily agricultural and mobile, primarily pastoral populations. Differences in the ratio of sheep to goat, males to females, and different demographic profiles in a herd will be shaped largely by environmental features and the balance between a desire to maximize the energy production off-take from a herd with considerations for its safe propagation and ability to endure an environmental calamity (1981: 234-309). Even then, his archaeological and ethnographic surveys suggested that there is little difference among sedentary agriculturalists and mobile pastoralists, even those connected to a modern market economy and heavily engaged in the exchange of secondary products such as wool: the overriding preference is to safely maintain herd propagation (1981: 363, 382).

Beyond the presence of domesticated animal remains, then, there is no particular faunal indication of a mobile pastoral society that serves to distinguish it from a sedentary agricultural society. In fact, as discussed above, there is reason to believe that faunal

remains of herded animals, especially sheep and goat, will be underrepresented at a mobile pastoral site, relative to a sedentary agricultural one. Furthermore, such a sample will likely be small and especially unsuitable to reconstructing mortuary profiles with the goal of understanding herd demographics or human management strategies. In fact, if anything, it seems more likely that mortuary profiles have more to say about the conditions under which herds were being managed, rather than the management strategies undertaken.

### **Material Correlates of Egalitarianism**

As has been demonstrated above, a significant degree of mobility, especially seasonal, as well as pastoralism, are characteristic, though not necessarily diagnostic, of segmentary lineage systems. Other traits that correlate with these systems, though not necessarily by proxy though mobility or pastoralism, include an ethic of political equality—what I shall refer to as egalitarianism—and an emphasis on non-specialized resource extraction. Both of these features carry archaeological implications, which will be explored in this section.

#### *Egalitarianism, Hierarchy, and Material Culture*

The structuring relationship that exists between egalitarianism and segmentary lineage systems was established in the previous chapter. It remains now to articulate the relationship between that structuring principle and its reflection in the archaeological record. Segmentary lineage systems are not unique in possessing an egalitarian quality and, as such, discussions of equality and emerging inequality relating especially to

prehistoric and ethnographically documented hunter-gatherer communities are also relevant to this discussion.

Questions of egalitarianism and hierarchy have been a central theme in archaeology ever since the beginning of the discipline, and a correlation of historical progress with emerging political hierarchy is fundamental to the modern, western conceptualization of history. For instance, the evolutionary categories of savagery, barbarism, and civilization, and neo-evolutionary categories of band, tribe, chiefdom, and state were conceived of as being organized, at their most basic level, on the order of increasing sociopolitical complexity and, by implication, stratification and inequality, with increasing disparities of power and wealth between individuals in the societies. Even when the neo-evolutionary classificatory system is rejected, an appreciation of this basic pattern is implicit (e.g. Wenke 1999: 347). Technological innovation, then, is understood to correlate generally with increasing economic productivity, sociopolitical complexity, and social, political, and economic inequality. These inequalities then have a complicated cause and effect relationship with the proliferation of social and economic roles and increasing status disparities. The very passage of time as it is appreciated by the archaeologist, in all but the most literal meaning of the term, is essentially relative to the accumulation of these changes. Of course, the assumption that inequality in one of these arenas implies inequality in the rest, and results in political hierarchy, has often fallen under question. A consideration of the difference between political rank and social status would take this conversation too far beyond the purpose of this chapter. What is of immediate concern here are the material manifestations of egalitarianism and inequality—in other words, archaeological evidence for political hierarchy in a society.

For most of the period of modern archaeological inquiry, if we understand that period to begin at about the time of the turn of the twentieth century, the investigation of status hierarchies through archaeology was guided by assumption. With the coming of the processual movement, of course, there was impetus to make such assumptions explicit and subject them to rigorous ‘scientific’ testing. A review of the literature from this period demonstrates a special preoccupation with mortuary data to this end, as evidenced by one of the seminal documents of the New Archaeology (Binford 1971). Nevertheless, the topic of material correlates of equality and inequality in the archaeological record is noticeably under-theorized. One scholar who has gone far in beginning that conversation has been Paul Wason (1985, 1994). His collection of such hypothesized material indicators of inequality, and his investigation of their validity through survey of the ethnographic record serves as the foundation for the following discussion.

In addition to mortuary indications of inequality, which will be treated at the end of this section, the material correlates that Wason identified can be grouped into three primary categories: artifactual, architectural, and his third category, which is difficult to address for a potentially mobile population, relates to inter-site measures of inequality through the distribution of sites on a landscape—in other words, settlement hierarchies. In terms of artifactual indications of inequality, Wason pointed out that differences in status are usually marked by differences in the quality and quantity of material goods, whether they be specific symbolic markers of status, or a more general difference in wealth between households, though he cautioned that wealth may vary for other reasons unrelated to status differences (1994: 103). The assumption here is that which is argued

for in the previous chapter, that in a stratified system there is differential access to material goods relative to status positions: “As major wealth differences probably would not develop, and certainly could not be maintained without stratification, they constitute evidence of this element of status” (1994: 125). Status markers, however, might be more subtle than general differences of wealth. At an intra-site level this stratification could be investigated through analysis of the distributional pattern of material culture, but would likely require a broader appreciation for the distribution of such artifacts. While Wason’s case studies include groups that could be termed mobile, large differences in the quantity of material goods among mobile pastoral populations is likely to be mitigated relative to the frequency of household movement. This would not, however, preclude the accumulation of more valuable material culture or specific markers of status. The identification of such markers, however, would potentially require a large regional database of mobile campsites, already notoriously ephemeral.

Architecture serves as another potentially rich source of information regarding status distinctions, at least among relatively sedentary societies. In the first place, Wason noted that “If the plan and architecture of a site are not homogenous it may indicate a differentiation in function among buildings implying activity specialization among residents” (1994: 135), and while this does not necessarily correlate directly with differences in rank, it does correlate with the presence of differing statuses within a site. Wason cautioned that “specialized, non-residential structures (and plans) may be found in non-hierarchical societies” (1994: 135). Wason cited Cliff to point out

how domestic architecture may serve as evidence of status: ‘Dwellings are viewed as complexes of architectural features that (a) individually symbolize the social status of the occupants, (b) collectively symbolize the social structure of the

community of which they are a part, and (c) change in recognizable ways as the social structure of the society changes' (1988: 200, 202).

1994: 136

He cautioned, however, that the form and character of residential architecture may be guided by myriad considerations. While major differences in residential form, size, and quality do imply status differentiations, such differences result from differential access to material and man-power. This may result simply from a larger household from which to draw labor. Variation in dwelling size, specifically, is a complicated factor. Wason noted that "there are at least three social bases for some dwellings being unusually large: status display and luxury, number of residents, and use for 'additional' functions not typical at the time" (1994: 140). Such functions may relate to social or ritual activities. Closely related to the size and quality of residence is the consideration of variation in residential plans, either related to functional purpose relating to higher status or symbolic, such as restriction of access, though these two functions need not be mutually exclusive (1994: 141).

In mobile pastoral societies, again, most if not all of these factors can be expected to be mitigated by the material restrictions placed on life by the need to move about the landscape. This will preclude the creation of domestic architecture of elaborate size, to the extent that its movement is hampered by the presence of enough beasts of burden to physically move a structure. Variation in the 'richness' of a domestic structure, then, is more likely to relate to the quality of materials used in its construction, but again we come up against the relative ephemerality of mobile pastoral remains. The size of domestic architecture among mobile populations has been known to vary, but ethnographers have more commonly linked this variation clearly to a single variable: the

size of the household itself. Thus, as household size fluctuates as sons marry and eventually move out of their parents tent, the size of the parents' tent will tend to swell and shrink in response.

A particularly useful account of the physical differences of the camp of a Sarhadi Baluch *sardar*, or tribal leader, comes from Salzman, who spent a month living in such a camp in 1973 and compares it to the more typical camps in which he spent most of his time in Baluchistan.

The Sardar's camp was similar in many ways to ordinary camps, but also different in ways that indicated greater prosperity and political importance. To begin with the tents were a bit larger than average... This reflected wealth and the related necessity of and capability for providing hospitality. Second, the women's clothes were newer and a bit more expensive, with impressive embroidery and decoration. Women also wore more of the traditional gold jewelry than would be found on women in ordinary herding camps. Third, motor vehicles... were more frequent than in other camps... Such a density of vehicles was highly exceptional in the tribe, but understandable in terms of the need for frequent travel... in the furtherance of leadership activities. A fourth difference, not discernible to the eye, or to my eye at least, was the presence of an unusual number of non-Yarahmadzai women married to the men of the camp... This reflected the affinal unions among the lineages of the tribal leaders... A fifth difference was the frequent arrival and high status of visitors and guests in the camp... Consequently, the camp of the Sardar provided an unusual amount of high-quality hospitality, including meals and sleeping quarters.

Salzman 2000: 326-27

First, it is important to point out here that the Sarhadi Baluch, at the time of Salzman's study, were a segmentary lineage society undergoing massive political and social changes under the influence of the Iranian state, transitioning from a functionally egalitarian society to something of a hybridized, post-segmentary lineage situation (see discussion in the previous chapter). That being said, a number of observations that Salzman made in the above citation carry very interesting archaeological implications for the study of status differentiation in mobile pastoral sites.

First, it is interesting to note that his description does not apply specifically to the tent or household of the *sardar* himself, but rather to his entire encampment, which can be understood as a sort of diffuse household. This potentially complicates the search for status distinctions in the archaeological record, as it implies the importance of a regional study of mobile pastoral sites for the identification of inequality between sites, as much as within them. Second, Wason's assumptions about the material results of status inequality are generally upheld: there is evidence of greater material wealth in the camp of the *sardar*, as well as larger households with somewhat more specialized spaces for sleeping and preparing meals. These differences, though subtle, would presumably still serve to distinguish the camp of the *sardar* from others in a regional study. While not discernible to the eye of the ethnographer, though perhaps still manifested by some subtle difference in material culture, the presence of a preponderance of women from outside the *sardar's* tribal section is nonetheless interesting, though any impact this may have on material culture in those households compared to others in his lineage would be pure speculation. Finally, the significance of the preponderance of vehicles in the camp is difficult to appreciate. It could suggest that beasts of burden might indicate a similar status distinction in antiquity. It is important to note, however, that the role played by the *sardar* among the Sarhadi Baluch at the time of Salzman's study was largely influenced by the nature of the relationship between the Sarhadi Baluch and the Iranian state, a relationship governed by material realities of the modern world and so, in an ancient situation, the relationship might have been such that no special premium was placed on transportation above and beyond what would have been expected for any camp.



The identification of status differentiation among mobile pastoral groups, then, in terms of domestic architecture, is likely to be subtle, for a number of reasons. First, the remains of mobile pastoralists are notoriously ephemeral to begin with. Second, there will be variation between households within a site relative to the size of those households, which may change frequently, but these changes will likely only be reflected between different campings of the same household, a sequence which cannot be reconstructed archaeologically. Finally, Salzman's experience suggests that the most promising avenue for the discovery of status inequality will manifest *between* campsites. There are, then, many difficulties for the archaeologist, not least of which is demonstrating that variation between camps in either architectural form or material richness does not relate to ecological or economic oscillations over time.

Another architectural category that Wason considered as a possible source of information about status inequality in the archaeological record is the phenomenon of non-residential architecture, by which he means *public* architecture, although the distinction is sometimes blurred, as is our ability to discriminate between the two functions. The principle is relatively straightforward: "Social complexity generally correlates with settlement complexity. If there are more different activities carried out or if they are more distinctive or institutionalized... the social order will embrace a greater range of statuses..." (Wason 1994: 146). In the above example, on an intra-site level there was little difference in statuses in the camp of the *sardar* compared to the other camps of his lineage:

The most striking thing about the Sardar's camp was how similar it was to every other Yarahmadzai camp. There were a dozen or so tents... the [herd] was small, around 140 animals. At any moment various men, women, and children were going about doing their household tasks. The women cleaned the tents and made

the meals, while the girls collected wood and went to the well. Boys tended the animals. The Sardar's wife made dinner for guests... The wives of the brothers of the Sardar... cleaned and straightened their tents, milked their animals, and made bread and meals and tea. The daughters of these men went to the well and collected wood as did daughters of the black tents in ordinary camps. When the camp moved, these women packed and set up the tents, always saying, of course, that the men could not set up the tents properly.

Salzman 2000: 326

Of course, for the reasons mentioned above, and those given in the previous chapter, we might not expect that much will have changed on an intra-site level in the case of the Sarhadi Baluch encampments, or, perhaps, any mobile pastoral groups in similar historical and political circumstances.

Renfrew has pointed out that public buildings are a necessity of complex society, with the level of labor and organization being clues to status distinctions (1972: 402). In other words, public architecture can suggest status differentiation, with the significance of this suggestion relative to the magnitude of the architectural undertaking. Wason cautioned, though, that ranking cannot be inferred from non-residential architecture, even if some amount of inequality is indicated by the presence of monumental structures or other indications of corporate labor (1994: 146). The difficulty, however, comes in the determination of what, precisely, qualifies as monumental architecture, and what an egalitarian society can accomplish relative to one with a status hierarchy. Interestingly, Wason noted that this question has not been thoroughly investigated ethnologically, though his impression is that any project of grand scale implies leadership, and "as evidence of leadership, it is also evidence of ranking, for while we can conceive of ranking with more prestige than authority, central authority without a distinctive status to bear that right makes no sense" (1994: 146-47).

In terms of mobile pastoral societies, there is not likely to be any investment in public architecture, and certainly there are no ethnographic examples of such. This makes perfect sense, though, for a mobile population. Nevertheless, public architecture need not imply monumentality or great permanence. For instance, Wason cited Alder and Wilshusen's 1990 study, which suggested that communal buildings were quite common among 'tribal' societies—in reference to the meaning of that term deriving from its evolutionary adaptation. The presence of such architectural units in the archaeological record, when not monumental, are completely ambiguous as to the presence of status inequalities in a society. In any case, such structures are not reported in ethnographic accounts of mobile pastoralists, though the presence of communal temporary structures among ancient mobile pastoral communities certainly cannot be ruled out. If such structures did exist, and they departed from normal domestic architectural forms, one might be tempted to interpret them as the domestic structure of an individual with high status, though the current review seems to suggest that these differences will be most apparent on an inter-site level of analysis.

It is worth pointing out, then, that there does not seem to have been much in the mobile pastoral way of life, especially in a traditionally defined, pre-modern condition, that would have allowed for the clear identification of role or status distinctions. The best indications would seem to be inter-site differences in material wealth and the size of domestic architecture, related to increased demands for the provisioning of guests. The fact that the mobile pastoral way of life is so materially unsuited to the communication of status distinctions and hierarchy could suggest that role and status differences are simply not commensurate with a mobile pastoral way of life in the first place, at least not nearly

so much so as with a sedentary way of life. There is simply not much role differentiation in such societies outside of individual households, which serve as the fundamental, ideally self-sustaining economic units. This observation remains speculation, and remains to be empirically tested, however it does seem to follow logically from the model of segmentary lineage systems that has been developed in this dissertation.

The final potential source of information for status inequality that Wason treated relates to the distribution of communities across a region, or landscape (1994: 127). On one hand this involves a discussion of central place theory and settlement hierarchies, topics that might have some relevance for the study of highly mobile populations, but whose relationships are far from clear. The investigation of these issues lay beyond the scope of this dissertation, and, nevertheless would assume the presence of a body of distributional data relating to temporary camps that simply does not exist in EBA Syria, and would require a solution to the problem of contemporaneity—always an issue in settlement studies, but especially relevant for studies of camp sites of seasonal or even shorter durations.

Another level of landscape study is the division of space within a single settlement and its immediate hinterland. Sizes of house lots and agricultural fields, in addition to access to resources and the “relative permanence of landholdings” are all relevant indicators, even if their significance might be difficult to appreciate (Wason 1994: 133). In fact, it has been shown in the previous chapter that if such divisions do exist, and can be attributed to individual households, on the order of private property, that wealth disparities that would normally even out over a long time span in a segmentary lineage society, eventually become entrenched and institutionalized. The social configurations,

then, are not causal from this perspective, but are rather a result of the existence of private property, at least in societies which were initially characterized by segmentary lineage systems in their configuration. Such a condition is not commensurate with segmentary lineage societies and, if it results from historical processes, suggests the question of what stimulant led to a departure from a segmentary lineage system.<sup>125</sup>

The material indications of inequality in a mobile pastoral society, then, would be difficult to identify, owing to the mobile nature of the society and the hardship that would be imposed by the transportation of greater quantities of material goods or larger domestic architecture. This does not preclude, however, the accumulation of concentrated forms of wealth such as precious metals or jewelry, or access to material of finer craftsmanship or of more exotic origin, which may serve as symbols of status distinction or simply also as forms of wealth. Unfortunately, these sorts of materials are precisely those which are so ephemeral even in the remains of sedentary, urban societies, and they can be expected to be even more rarely encountered among the temporary, seasonal camps of mobile pastoral communities. Possibly one of the more promising avenues of investigation would involve inter-site comparisons. This approach, however, is beset with difficulties as well. Assuming a large enough sample size existed for such an investigation, the problem of contemporaneity for such studies would be formidable. How could a researcher determine that the relative difference in wealth or domestic structure size between sites did not relate to the size of the household or relative differences in ecological and demographic conditions that vary from year to year among mobile pastoral populations? Possibly some symbolic indication of status distinction

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<sup>125</sup> Such inequalities, though, while not existing on the inter-household level, may indeed characterize relationships between segmentary lineage societies on an 'international' level of interaction.

may be identified, but, again, this would require a large dataset with which to investigate the patterning of artifact deposition and frequency.

### *Rank, Status, and Mortuary Material Culture*

The analysis of status hierarchies and relations of equality and inequality in the archaeological record is most often carried out through an analysis of a society's mortuary remains. The reasons why this has been the case are clear. First, mortuary remains are often encountered in a primary context—in the state in which their creators left them. This invariably leads to a thorough accounting and cataloging of grave goods and an almost implicit ranking of graves in terms of their material richness. Second, they are a commonly encountered and recognized archaeological context. Third, mortuary contexts are symbolically charged spaces, with symbolism in some way shaped by conceptions of death, the identity of the deceased, and power relations among the living (Wason 1994: 67). Because they are a locus for such symbolically meaningful behavior, though, mortuary contexts are often also a precarious foundation upon which to build a picture of a society's social organization.

The most straightforward method for inferring the presence of ranked hierarchies from mortuary contexts emerged from the processual interest in mortuary analysis in the 1970s. This method can be called the 'energy expenditure hypothesis' and is summarized by Tainter as follows:

In any system of hierarchical ranking, increased relative ranking of status positions will positively covary with increased numbers of persons recognizing duty-status relationships with individuals holding such status positions. [This] entitles the deceased to a larger amount of corporate involvement in the act of interment...

Tainter 1977: 332

Essentially, then, those individuals in a society who are more important—who hold relatively greater power—will have their death marked in a mortuary context by a relatively greater amount of community involvement, as measurable at least indirectly in terms of total energy expended on their mortuary process. Joseph Tainter found this to be true in an ethnological review of 103 different case studies (1977: 332). Careful archaeological investigation of these mortuary contexts, then, the hypothesis suggests, should be able to indicate whether or not a society was ranked or egalitarian. Wason, however, criticized Tainter's conclusion by pointing out that in many of the cases he tested, the correlation was only very general (1994: 77). He went on to point out three primary difficulties involved in actually applying this hypothesis to the archaeological record. First, insofar as the hypothesis would hold true for an archaeological population, Wason's ethnological review demonstrated that "Only a small fraction of all mortuary activity—that directly related to corpse disposal—is recorded archaeologically in a way that is now recognizable (Bartel 1982: 54)" (1994: 70). Second, differences between burials are mostly small and so we can't be sure they are actually meaningful in marking hierarchical differences (Wason 1994: 79). Third, "the value people bestow upon an object is not based solely on how much energy went into its making, but may be affected by frequency of natural occurrence, utilitarian value, a history of cultural associations, or subtle personal preference" (Wason 1994: 76). Nevertheless, Wason acceded that larger differences in energy expenditure between intra-societal, contemporary burials, when shown not to correlate with non-hierarchical social roles such as gender or other group membership, "is a good generalized starting place, helping to narrow the range of societal

forms out burial data could represent, and offering a rough idea of the degree of social complexity” (1994: 80).

A segmentary lineage society, being egalitarian, can then be expected to demonstrate very little to no variation in energy expenditure between burials, all the more because, even in hierarchically organized societies, such differences are usually only weakly marked. Variation in energy expenditure that is encountered, as indicated by the quality, quantity, or types of grave goods, must be investigated to determine if they coordinate with possible differences of identity relating to roles other than hierarchical status. In a segmentary lineage society, though, few such roles other than age and gender can be anticipated. Even in a segmentary lineage society, though, some degree of disparity may be detected. Such disparity could be indicative of a few different possibilities. First, it is possible that an individual with a larger family, or one who died at a time of relative plenty would be more richly outfitted than an individual from a smaller family, or during a period of general want. This is both because more material and more labor might be available to devote to the mortuary custom. Not unrelated to both of these conditions is the possibility that an individual achieved a certain degree of status which might set him or her apart from contemporaries. In a segmentary lineage society, it would be expected that as an individual accumulates more descendants, from one to two and possibly three generations, this may be more the case. One would not expect a community outside of the immediate household, or possibly also households in a direct lineage to the deceased, to be involved in the mortuary process. In short, then, achieved status differences might be expected in a segmentary lineage society, though these are likely to coordinate with gender and household size, and therefore indirectly



with age. These differences, however, would still be expected to be small, and likely not to exceed a threshold at which point they would become unambiguous indications of status differentiation. It has been noted, however, that there appears to be a cross-cultural phenomenon by which social status rank in mortuary contexts is more overtly displayed when a social system is unstable and undergoing structural changes (Parker Pearson 1982: 112). Thus, if significant differences in energy expenditure are encountered in a context which is otherwise thought to relate to a mobile pastoral society, it might indicate an ongoing process whereby a segmentary lineage system is becoming eclipsed, where social structures producing a situation of egalitarianism are being replaced through a process whereby some individuals or families enjoy wider access to material wealth and political power than others, perhaps by controlling the means of production.

On ethnographic terms, Wason has investigated six different mortuary features that can be indicative of social status hierarchies. These features are: 1) variation in tomb form, 2) communal burials, 3) variation in quantity of burial goods, 4) variation in artifact type, 5) differences which cut across age, sex, and social groups, and 6) organization of the mortuary context. While all of these features can be indicative of social status hierarchies, ethnographic review suggests caution in all cases. For instance, Wason found that the first of these is often indicative of, but has no necessary relationship to rank differences, and is most clearly the case only in terms of monumental tomb architecture (1994: 87). Communal burials, while generally indicating the considerable importance of kin groups, are more often associated with situations of ascribed status differences, though not to the exclusion of achieved status differences (1994: 89-90). Furthermore, variation in the quantity of burials goods, while being the most common

topic of investigation of inequality in mortuary studies, is itself rather uncommon (Wason 1994: 93). Wason also found that meaningful variations in artifact type may include form, quality, raw material, the source of the material, the proportion of utilitarian to non-utilitarian goods in a mortuary context, and the presence of sacrificial victims, but cautioned that all these differences must be weighed against possible age or sex associations to rule out correlations of differences with other non-hierarchical roles (Wason 1994: 93-97). Differences cutting across age, sex, and social group divisions, though, may still not be indicative of social status hierarchies (Wason 1994: 98). Instead, the most important way of inferring the difference between hereditary and achieved status, as ethnological review has indicated, is the pattern by which status is expressed among age groups (Wason 1994: 100). When children appear to receive high-status treatment, “we can infer that status is at least partially inherited” (Wason 1994: 99). Finally, spatial organization of the mortuary context can be combined by correlation to reinforce the hypothesis of status differences made on the basis of other material distinctions. On the other hand, “if the groupings cross-cut other variables, that is, the spatial groups are similar to each other in range of variation, they most likely represent some ‘horizontal’ (not hierarchical) social distinction, again kin groups, or sodalities” (Wason 1994: 102).

Segmentary lineage societies should be expected to lack any evidence of ascribed differences in hierarchical social rank. Status differences may well be marked. These will likely distinguish between genders and ages, the most important variables determining social role in contemporary analogue segmentary lineage societies. Differences in the relative material wealth and energy expended on a burial are likely to

vary on the basis of the recent ecological conditions, which will govern the amount of materials available for inclusion in a burial context, and to some extent also the range of material available, to the extent that rare materials or finished artifacts are acquired by trade. They will also vary to the extent that manpower is available to be devoted on the mortuary rites. These are likely to be exclusively the responsibility of the immediate household and subsidiary households in the direct lineage of the deceased. Thus, energy expenditure will also depend upon the size of this extended household and their own situations as regards the availability of labor. Most importantly, of course, and most difficult to anticipate, all mortuary customs will vary greatly on the basis of ideology, which, while not arbitrarily determined, may be nonetheless impossible to anticipate. Such ideological idiosyncrasies may serve to obscure significant differences or similarities of hierarchical status in mortuary contexts. Unfortunately, it is not possible to test these assumptions against contemporary analogues, all having been influenced in their mortuary practices to great degree by the spread of Islam in southwest Asia more than a millennium ago, though a newly published work may help to illuminate these issues (Kressel et al. 2014).

Other evidence from a mortuary context relating to the physical remains themselves, when these are in a good enough condition to warrant their study, may also provide some clues as to social hierarchy. As mentioned above, societies characterized by a segmentary lineage system, owing to their mobility, might be set apart by osteological evidence of mobility. To the extent that beasts of burden were ridden during the course of migrations and during day-to-day shepherding activities, and to the extent that other habitual activities interfered with the sort of remodeling in the lower limbs

expected to correlate with mobility this effect may be mitigated. Other indications, however, involve the pattern of dietary stress and disease in a mortuary population. For instance, tooth wear patterns and analysis of trace elements and stable isotopes in the skeletons can all suggest dietary differences that may correlate with differential access to food resources and might suggest a social hierarchy. At the same time, indications of physical trauma, especially that associated with habitual activities, or indications of disease, when patterned over an entire mortuary population could suggest the presence of different classes of individuals, again correlating with hierarchical status distinctions. Due to the nature of a segmentary lineage system as one in which there are few role differences that are not related to age and gender, and within genders most life histories are identical in broad strokes, a mortuary population would be unlikely to vary significantly in terms of diet or disease, or in terms of trauma related to habitual activities, except perhaps between genders, as all ethnohistorically-attested analogue societies demonstrate a strong sexual division of labor.

### *Landscapes of a Segmentary Lineage Economy*

Some implications regarding landscape features associated with segmentary lineage systems have been discussed already in this chapter. These have followed as a consequence of the association of segmentary lineage systems with mobile pastoralism and include the necessity of adequate pasturage and water in a region within reach of potential campsites and the seasonality of ecology and movement associated with these requirements. Other more specific landscape implications also arise directly from segmentary lineage structures. This includes the wider ecological implications of a

strategy of multiple resource extraction and the temporal-spatial patterning of economic resources will have certain implications for territoriality, which will reflect an experience of the landscape unique to segmentary lineage societies, which can serve to distinguish them from sedentary agricultural, as well as mobile hunter-gatherer populations.

Symbolically significant architectural features on a landscape such as cairns, tumuli, standing stones, and other places of ritual activity will be treated in the next section.

As was made clear in the previous chapter, segmentary lineage systems are characterized by mobile pastoral subsistence strategies, but not by specialization or the exclusion of other subsistence practices. Rather, ancient segmentary lineage societies would have been engaged in both animal husbandry pursuits as well as the gathering of wild resources, perhaps especially the seasonal exploitation of wild fruit and nut crops, and perhaps other horticultural pursuits. One baseline investigation into ancient segmentary lineage societies, then, would be the reconstruction of the environment of an ancient landscape, as completely as possible, to determine the existence of pasture and primary subsistence resources. The reader will perhaps appreciate at once that this constitutes a fairly low level of requirement, especially for Syria in the EBA. This highlights a point following from this study which, though perhaps obvious, is worth stressing: the resource requirements of mobile pastoralism, and by extension segmentary lineage systems, are essentially those of hunting and gathering, with the single provision that some level of year-round pasture must be available in a region. While it carries enormous structural implications, at an ecological level mobile pastoralism only differs from hunting and gathering in these terms.

This view is at odds with one popular treatment of ‘nomadic’ territoriality and landscapes which argued that a significant difference in the territoriality of hunter-gatherers and ‘nomads’ lay in their different economic *ethea* (Cribb 199a1: 21). When Cribb said, for instance, that while “the hunter-gatherer exploitation strategy is an eclectic one which incorporates a wide range of available and preferred plant and animal species, that of the pastoralist is driven by a single overriding preoccupation—the search for pasture for his flocks” (1993: 21) and claimed that while hunter-gatherers move to resources, or move to vary their economic strategy, ‘nomads’ only move their infrastructures, and only do so in order to maintain the same strategy (1993: 22), he was overemphasizing their differences and falling into the trap of modeling his characterization of mobile pastoralists on true *nomads*, the pastoral *specialists* that seem to only characterize the recent development of modern sociopolitical relationships between segmentary lineage, and now, post-segmentary lineage societies, and urban-based sedentary nation states.<sup>126</sup> Following Khazanov and others, Cribb overemphasized the differences between hunter-gatherer and mobile pastoral societies with respect to their territorial characters and their experience of a landscape:

Whereas the hunter-gatherer exploitation strategy is an eclectic one which incorporates a wide range of available and preferred plant and animal species, that of the pastoralist is driven by a single overriding preoccupation—the search for pasture for his flocks... This means that the hunter-gatherer's territorial system is far more complex than that of the pastoralist—attuned as it is to the competing demands of a wide range of resources. While the hunter-gatherer will be familiar with the entire spectrum of resources and features in his landscape, the pastoralist will be acquainted with only a narrow band comprising the pastoral niche itself... The pastoral nomad's mode of migration is therefore direct and certain.

Cribb 1991a: 21

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<sup>126</sup> In fact, a study carried out by Casimir (1992: 174-75) suggests a correlation between the level of aridity encountered in most parts of Syria with a communal, kin-based ideology among mobile pastoralists—in other words, a segmentary lineage system.

While the difference between the purely extractive hunter-gatherer subsistence strategy and the productive aspect of non-specialized mobile pastoral strategies is significant and accounts for potential significant structural differences between the two types, their experience of the landscape is likely to be broadly similar, depending on the specific ecological niches exploited. One could imagine that a landscape of mobile pastoral exploitation would not necessarily differ from one of hunter-gatherer exploitation. After all, hunting and gathering activities are not anathema to mobile pastoralists. Differences of territoriality between such groups, then, would have more to do with historical contingency than fundamentally different economic systems. Ethnological research has suggested, in fact, that such differences are related far more to environmental and political conditions than to any inherent economic differences (Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978; Casimir 1992; Barnard 1992).

To some extent, the root of Cribb's misunderstanding lay, actually, with Ingold (1987), whom he cited at the beginning of his discussion. Ingold was dissatisfied with previous treatments of mobility that seemed to privilege pastoral populations and discount the mobility of other groups, such as hunter-gatherers (1987: 167). His solution was to reduce the difference to that of differing economic *ethea*, leading to different territorial natures—in other words, different *types* of mobility between pastoralists and hunter-gatherers. Ingold argued that the social relations of pastoralists are independent of location, being based on the mobile herds themselves, whereas the social relations of hunting groups is anchored in fixed points on the landscape “where herds may be found or intercepted” (1987: 168). While Ingold (1987: 168-69) did acknowledge the great range of variation in mobility patterns evidenced by ‘nomadic’ pastoral populations, as

did Cribb (1991a: 21), the assumption of specialized pastoralism, necessitating essential and complete nomadism and territorial divorce is misleading. This assumption arose, ultimately, from the ignorance of the significance of segmentary lineage structures and the differences between societies characterized by segmentary lineage systems and other mobile groups, and attempts to account for such differences through the practice of mobility or pastoralism alone—attempts which tend to stress the extremes of a range of possible forms and, ironically, miss the significance of segmentary lineage systems, which only characterizes societies in the median of these ranges, as was illustrated in figure 3.4.

The fact that hunting-gathering and mobile pastoral strategies differ only in the necessity of the availability of pasture in the latter case implies that a vast area of the ancient Near East would have been appropriate territory for exploitation by mobile pastoral populations. The fact that such populations are not in evidence now, nor necessarily in the historical or archaeological record in many places, may have more to do with the relatively greater productivity of these areas for agricultural production and historical contingency. It is, however, possible that in some periods in prehistory the mobile pastoral, multi-resource exploitation of the landscape was widespread and characterized the majority of the region's population. Beyond establishing the possibility, or at least probability, that multi-resource mobile pastoralism (i.e. a segmentary lineage economic system) could have existed in a region, specific investigations into the seasonality and possible nature of resource distribution on a landscape could suggest the character or even direction of seasonal movements, and possibly help to identify areas of seasonal habitation. Where these border on or conflict



with the territorial interests of sedentary states, this could suggest increasing interaction or importance of relationships between segmentary lineage and sedentary polities. Such an investigation could be carried out by integrating climatological and archaeobotanical data into a GIS database to create a heuristically useful ecological model of seasonal and inter-annual variation of resource availability.

### *Symbolic Landscapes of Mobile Pastoralism*

Some of the landscape features that have been attributed to mobile pastoral populations in the Near East include mortuary structures, cairns, standing stones, and places of seeming ritual significance (e.g. Wilkinson 2003: 176-181). Together, such features potentially bear witness to the presence of mobile pastoral populations and indicate places of symbolic, and very likely, political and economic significance to these societies. The difficulty, of course, is in establishing a relationship between these monuments and a mobile pastoral population in the region. The form and character of the features themselves, however, are generally ambiguous as to the sociopolitical system of their creators. Connections between them are usually made for a combination of the following reasons: (1) the existence of such structures in the absence of any known nearby permanent settlements, (2) the unsuitability of the surrounding environments for sedentary agricultural practices, (3) the regional distribution of such monuments with inferred areas of ancient mobile pastoral activity, and (4) analogies about such constructions drawn from contemporary analogues. On their own, each individual point has its own shortcomings. First, the absence of known permanent settlements in the area of such monuments does not guarantee that no such settlement ever existed, simply that

one has not been recognized. Even if it is the case that no nearby settlement existed or was associated with the construction of such monuments, this may suggest that a mobile population was responsible for construction but is not, in itself, enough to suggest a mobile pastoral group, or specifically one with a segmentary lineage system. Second, the fact that local environments were unsuitable to agricultural pursuits must be based on knowledge about the ancient environment and, even if true, does not preclude the possibility that sedentary populations from farther away, or hunting-gathering populations, were responsible for the creation of some monuments. Third, the correlation of the distribution of monuments in a region in such a pattern that correlates with inferred ancient mobile pastoral migrations systems, while intriguing, is ultimately circumstantial and is more compelling when combined with other evidence. Finally, analogies drawn from contemporary mobile pastoral populations face three potential complicating factors: (1) the widespread influence of Islamic religious practices in the modern period,<sup>127</sup> (2) the influence of modern nation states and the creation of systems of hierarchy within mobile pastoral societies, or else their integration into such systems, which is likely to influence burial practices especially,<sup>128</sup> and (3) the simple influence of time and culture change between any two societies, in this case modern and ancient, regarding ideas about places of symbolic and cultural significance and the appropriate means of marking and identifying these spaces in a landscape. There is nothing essential to segmentary lineage systems either directly, or indirectly through the influence of mobile pastoralism, that

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<sup>127</sup> Though on the subject of relic pre-Islamic mortuary traditions see Kressel et al. 2012 and 2014.

<sup>128</sup> See, for instance, Prag 1995 who discusses the observations of Conder 1889 regarding differential burial practices relating to hierarchical distinctions within populations of Bedouin mobile pastoral groups in the Transjordan in the late nineteenth century AD.

suggests that features such as these are a necessary material expression of those structures.

While it is impossible to anticipate, let alone enumerate, all the possible cultural significances or functions such landmarks could embody when they are the product of a segmentary lineage society, some interpretations immediately suggest themselves. The first of these is not unique to segmentary lineage systems and makes no appeal to any structural specificities. This is the possibility that such markers serve to mark territorial control or ownership by specific polities. In a well-known article, Colin Renfrew argued that megalithic tombs in northwestern Europe demonstrated territorial behavior in a context of population pressure (1976). Similar arguments have been made for other monumental or megalithic structures, especially mortuary structures, when these are thought *a priori* to have been associated with ancient mobile pastoral populations (e.g. Porter 2000). The application of such an argument to a mobile society makes sense, as the need to advertise control or ownership of a territory may continue beyond the seasonal occupation of that territory. Tombs or other monuments, then, advertise the claim of the mobile group throughout the year, even when they are not present to defend their rights of access. Prag has argued in the EBA Levant, that the alternating chronological pattern of megalithic structures, in use at the very beginning and end of the EBA period there, and fortified settlements, present in the area in the middle of the EBA period, indicates that these structures served in part to make territorial claims in the absence of permanent, defensible settlements (1995: 84). Another interpretation that does make reference to structural specificities of segmentary lineage systems is also suggested by analogy with ethnographically attested mortuary practices of Negevite

Bedouin. Kressel and colleagues described an ethnographically-attested ritual among this group, called the *zyâra*, whereby lineage membership and relationships are reaffirmed at the shrines of common ancestors (2012: 63).

Although any landscape features, even monumental ones, could have been built by an egalitarian, segmentary lineage society, the form and character any of these features take will likely be ambiguous with respect to the social system of their creators. This is not necessarily the case for unattached cemeteries. Cemeteries used by segmentary lineage societies should exhibit egalitarian social principles and, possibly, multiple burial practices reflecting the importance of kin groups in structuring the system. In neither of these two respects, however, should the cemeteries of segmentary lineage systems necessarily be unique from those of many sedentary agriculturalists or mobile hunter-gatherer societies. Even the presence of livestock as grave goods cannot rule out these other possibilities. At the same time, the emergence of hierarchical distinctions in unattached cemeteries may suggest the integration of mobile pastoral societies into a hierarchical system or the creation of such a system through interaction with other polities, especially sedentary agricultural polities.

### *Conclusion*

Segmentary lineage systems *per se*, independent of secondary associations with material culture through the cultural correlates of mobility and pastoralism, are defined primarily by kin groups, arranged in a nested hierarchy of unilineal segmentation, and an ethos of equality between those groups at every level of segmentation. In other words, segmentary lineage societies are functionally egalitarian. In this way, they are not

necessarily different from many sedentary agricultural and mobile hunter-gatherer groups. Even those groups which are hierarchically organized may not display this hierarchy in a way that can be easily detected in the archaeological record. Furthermore, the detection of hierarchical indicators in the archaeological record in and of themselves are not enough to rule out the possibility of a post-segmentary lineage society, indicating a process of changing structuration, whereby an emerging hierarchical pattern signifies the process of this institutionalization. No features discussed here, then, are sufficient in and of themselves to either confirm or disprove the existence of a segmentary lineage polity in the archaeological record.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is not possible to point to any single trait in the archaeological record with which one may discriminate the presence or absence of segmentary lineage societies. Instead, any such undertaking relies on a multi-factorial approach, one which integrates survey data, archaeological excavation, knowledge of object classes and technologies, and a landscape approach, and the evaluation of a constellation of different factors. That being said, the most significant material correlates relate to evidence of mobility and pastoralism, especially in the form of pastoral campsites. Even then, one of the more sobering points expounded by this chapter is that mobile communities are, sometimes, stubbornly invisible and indifferent to the attempts of researchers to identify them as such and locate them on a topographic, chronological map of human history. It may serve as a useful exercise, then, at this time, to review a handful of cases where the presence of segmentary lineage systems, or at least mobile pastoral populations, have

been hypothesized on the basis of material remains. Such a review may serve to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to the problem.

### *Archaeological Examples*

By far the most difficult aspect of any archaeological search for traces of segmentary lineage societies is the great ambiguity of interpretation that most of the material lends itself towards. Without a significant preponderance of data or historical or diachronic archaeological contexts, this task can be an exercise in possibilities. Such ambiguous examples are easily identified in the literature. This is usually the case because such examples serve as chronological and/or geographical unicums, and the nature of the remains, themselves, is not enough to rule out at least a mixed, semi-sedentary agricultural economy. For example, see especially Tepe Tula'i (Hole 1975; Wheeler Pires-Ferreira 1977), but also Ali Kosh and Tepe Ashrafabad (Hole et al. 1969: 59-60), Tepe Farukabad (Wright 1981: 78), Tepe Sarab, Ganj-i-Dareh, and Tepe Guran (Mortensen 1972), Shanidar (Perkins 1964), and Deh Morasi Ghundai (Dupree 1963; Fairervis 1961) to name just a few.

When archaeological studies of mobile pastoral societies are generally recognized as being successful, it is because the presence of more sedentary populations can be ruled out altogether, as in the case of Roger Cribb's case study of the recently abandoned campsites of Nemrut Dağ. Nemrut Dağ is a circular caldera, located just west of Lake Van in eastern Turkey, comprising an area 8 km in diameter with a perennial lake covering roughly the western one-third of its surface area. The climate of the caldera is very cool, with temperatures regularly remaining below freezing in the winter and not

exceeding 25° C in the summer. The lower elevations of the caldera receive from 300-400 mm of annual precipitation, while higher elevations experience between one to one and a half meters of annual precipitation, generally in the winter in the form of snow, which accumulates and remains for approximately one hundred and thirty days of the year (Cribb 1991a: 185-86). Although the volcanic nature of the soils in the caldera result in a soil acidity level that is too high to sustain agricultural production, an abundance of snowmelt and almost unlimited water in the summer months make the caldera an attractive summertime highland pasture for mobile pastoralists in the Lake Van region (1991a: 187). Cribb visited the caldera twice, in 1978 and 1981, in order to observe recently abandoned camp-sites, draw inferences and make interpretations about the societies that produced the campsites, and then to test these interpretations against ethnographic observations (Beşikçi 1969) of the contemporary denizens of Nemrut Dağ, a local Kurdish ‘tribe’, the Alikan (1991a: 187). Cribb’s intention with this chapter of his book was to communicate to the reader that a systematic approach to the study of ‘nomadic’ society, even one ignorant of any historical or ethnographic information, could still produce relevant and valuable results. This point is well taken, though the most significant point is one that Cribb himself glossed over: “From the point of view of some future archaeologists... there would be little—beyond its location in such a harsh environment and its open ground plan—to indicate that it was anything other than a sedentary village” (1991a: 195). The most significant aspect of such a hypothetical future archaeologist would be the ability to rule out the presence of either an agricultural society or hunter-gatherers. An inability to do so, or to distinguish between the social boundaries between such groups, hamstring interpretive efforts. This point is well

illustrated in two different ways by two regional studies of ancient mobile pastoral landscapes—one carried out in Baluchistan in the 1970s (Miragliuolo 1979) and a more recent and more technologically sophisticated study of eastern Kazakhstan carried out in the last fifteen years (Frachetti 2004).

In 1975, Judith Miragliuolo began an archaeological survey in Northern Baluchistan, in the areas of the Khash Plain, especially the Khash and Shah Nawazi Valleys, and the eastern part of the Taftan Massif (1979: 16). This survey was aimed at filling in the archaeological record of an area of the world that, at the time, was largely *terra incognita*. Her study was also aimed, more generally, at evaluating the possibility of using survey data, especially as it related to settlement patterns, to investigate ancient mobile pastoral subsistence strategies and changes in regional socioeconomic systems over time (1979: 2-3, 180). Ultimately, the results and usefulness of this study would be limited by the lack of other archaeological investigation in the region and the limits placed upon Miragliuolo by her permit—she was not allowed to avail herself of any excavation whatsoever (1979: 124).

The selection of this region for the archaeological investigation of mobile pastoralism was not arbitrary. Baluchistan was an auspicious choice for two reasons in particular. First, it was a semi-arid environment where agriculture was practiced only with great difficulty in most locations, and seemingly had been for much of the history of human habitation there. Miragliuolo reported that the region of her survey contained “Not a single perennial stream” (1979: 18). The region lay between the 200 and 300 mm isohyet, indicating that it is marginal for rainfall agricultural practices, but the wide inter-annual variation in rainfall amounts are particularly disruptive to any rainfall agricultural



pursuits. As reported by Miragliuolo, “According to the 1959 Italconsult study, a five-year average rainfall for Khash was 140 mm; in 1975 there was a 256 mm rainfall” (1979: 22). The area, at the time of her study, could largely be characterized as rangeland. Nevertheless, there was agricultural production in the region, including “small amounts of wheat, eggplants, and melons... grapes...” and, “in the better-watered areas, pistachios, pomegranate, and almond trees...” (1979: 32). This production was limited to areas of continuous water supply, either a handful of natural springs, wells, or electric pumps (1979: 31). The remains of other water management features from some ancient periods were also sometimes observed. For instance, many *qanat* systems were encountered in ruinous states, dating to the first millennium BC (ibid). Nevertheless, it was safe to assume that any sites found without association to perennial water sources were not the settlements of agricultural populations. Another reason the region was ideal for study is also related to its relative aridity and the difficulty of expanding agriculture there. Although this was not pointed out by Miragliuolo in her study, such a landscape has the potential to be one of great conservation. Without good opportunities for intensive cultivation and expansive use of land, and in arid conditions, ephemeral campsites have relatively good chances for preservation close to the surface.

Miragliuolo was able to identify 106 sites dating to seven different periods in seven different ecological zones (1979: 155-172). These sites were sorted according to their surface extent, with the assumption being that the surface extent of a site would correlate directly with the length of human occupation at the site (1979: 143). Mobile pastoral sites were identified on the bases that agricultural practice could be ruled out on ecological grounds, and that patterns of site distribution correlated with the seasonal

settlement patterns of contemporary Sarhadi Baluch mobile pastoralists inhabiting the area at the time of her study.<sup>129</sup> Although these assumptions could not be verified by excavation, some of the sites betrayed evidence of their nature on the surface, such as stone footings and platforms as foundations for black tent structures (1979: 136-37). Although results from excavation would have been more satisfying, Miragliuolo argued forcefully that “The pastoral nomadic nature of the sites... is strongly suggested by the evidence found on the surface” (1979: 254). Although she did an admirable job of sorting and describing material remains from the sites surveyed, the lack of any excavated, stratified sample seriously hindered efforts to place the survey results into a chronological framework (1979: 179).

Nevertheless, Miragliuolo succeeded in two things. First, she demonstrated that, given the right conditions, it is possible to identify a seasonal pattern of mobile pastoral settlements from survey. Second, she was able to define, in the broadest terms, the history of land use in this part of the Sarhad. After evidence of hunter-gatherers in the Khash Valley in the Middle Paleolithic the earliest evidence of human occupation was not until the 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium. Seventeen small sites were found to date to this period, of which nine were temporary camps, seven were more permanent in nature, and one was a special function site. The distribution of these temporary sites suggested a mobile pastoral subsistence strategy, but the nature of the relationship between the populations represented by these sites and those corresponding to what were interpreted as more permanent settlements is not at all clear. Miragliuolo could only speculate that “The economy of the area during the fourth and third millennia may have been that of

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<sup>129</sup> This was at roughly the same time that they were being ethnographically investigated by Salzman (2000).

small villages which combined limited agriculture with caprovine herding” (1979: 175). The first millennium BC was witness to twenty-nine sites, roughly split between impermanent and permanent settlements. This period also saw the initiation of the *qanat* systems, some of which were still in operation at the time of Miragliuolo’s survey (1979: 176). At this time, she reasoned, population pressure on the plains pushed a segment of society into a relatively inhospitable zone, coinciding with an increasing focus on nomadic pastoralism (1979: 177). During the Islamic period, pastoral nomadism seems to have expanded at the expense of long-term settlements, a pattern which continued into the modern period (1979: 178). When it comes to the question of what the nature of integration between pastoral and agricultural productive systems was, however, Miragliuolo was unable to offer any insights, only speculation based on contemporary ethnographic observations (1979: 281-82), comprising conditions which, for many reasons discussed throughout this dissertation and especially as regards the Sarhadi Baluch in Chapter 3, should be understood as being unique to that modern period.

During the fourth and third millennia it is likely that the bimodal adaptation—pastoralism and agriculture—characterized the Indo-Iranian Borderlands. The two economies were in all likelihood never mutually exclusive. To the contrary, they were probably interdependent from the earliest periods, with pastoralists supplying dairy products, leather, hides, and hair and agriculturalists supplying food staples, pottery, and other goods... To carry this one step further, it may be hypothesized that pastoralists and agriculturalists may have been members of the same kinship group and their residences may often have coincided, as they do among the Sarhad Baluch today. Many of the prehistoric (as well as later sites) in the Khash area may actually represent dual function localities where tents or huts of mobile pastoralists were juxtaposed with the more permanent architecture of cultivators... In much of Baluchistan, truly compact villages are few or nonexistent, and thus semi-permanent villages and the pastoral practices which characterize them may have been widespread.

1979: 281-82

Miragliuolo offered an hypothesis—really speculation—of how the economic systems may have been integrated. The purpose of this study, of course, will be to address precisely the nature of this integration during the EBA in Syria. Was there ever a society in the Khash Valley possessing a segmentary lineage system? Did it exist side-by-side with a sedentary agricultural society? Was there a social boundary between these two groups or were they integrated somehow? Did the mobile population dominate the sedentary one or vice versa? And how did the nature of this relationship change over time? It is simply not possible to answer these questions from Miragliuolo's data.

For an example of a very recent and more nuanced approach to the investigation of a mobile pastoral landscape one can turn to a regional survey of the Koksu River Valley in the Dzhungar Mountains in the Semirech'ye region of eastern Kazakhstan carried out in 2002 (Frachetti 2004). This study constituted the director's dissertation work and comprised the basis for ongoing research in the area. Like Miragliuolo's, this study was based on a relatively restricted geographical region, with ample sources of ethnographic analogies, and where widespread agricultural practices could be ruled out for most of history. Unlike Miragliuolo's study in the early 1970's, Frachetti's operated in a context that was better established archaeologically, and consequently materially better documented. Furthermore, he was able to make recourse to limited excavations and modern computing technology, specifically the integration of survey data into a GIS for the purpose of the analysis of ancient strategies of land use and mobility. Finally, the theoretical perspective of the director was also more nuanced than the heavy processual tone encountered in Miragliuolo's work, having been inspired toward an interest in sites of human habitation and activity as nodes in a network on a landscape that is both

naturally and socially defined (e.g. Ingold 1993), especially through the Giddensian “concept of time-geography—which placed individuals and groups in dynamic relationships in geographic space, and in temporally relative proximity (Giddens 1984: 111-112)” (Frachetti 2002: 26). Like much Anglo-American archaeology since the widespread adoption of Bourdieu’s theory of praxis (Bourdieu 1977), Frachetti’s focus is on the individual, the small-scale, and a bottom-up approach to cultural change and synthesis. He stood, therefore, in complete contradiction to previous Russian-language and Soviet approaches to the archaeology of the Asian steppe in the Bronze Age, which treated the broadly similar cultural material of the period as a more monolithic entity—the Andronovo Cultural Complex (ACC).

Frachetti’s survey covered 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> of territory and led to the cataloging of 382 archaeological features, including burials, settlements, and rock art panels (2004: 260-62). Like the study area undertaken by Miragliuolo, Frachetti was able, at the outset, to establish from environmental factors that sustained, large-scale agricultural practices in his survey area were impossible without artificial or modern technology, though the region was well-suited to pastoral production strategies that relied on seasonal, vertical patterns of transhumance (2004: 150). In this way, Frachetti was not challenged by the need to define the boundaries of any specific sociopolitical groupings with different foci on subsistence practices and he was able to treat all archaeological features together in his GIS-aided analysis, as the sites of mobile, primarily pastoral producers. The lack of any period of intensive agricultural expansion, especially modern expansion, undoubtedly aided in the preservation of archaeological features related to mobile settlement systems in the Koksū River Valley.

Although their theoretical and methodological orientations differed, as did the archaeological and specific ethnohistorical contexts in which they were working, Miragliuolo and Frachetti's studies shared another important similarity. In both cases, the research aspirations both scholars had for their studies far outstripped the robusticity of their data. This has been discussed already for Miragliuolo. Frachetti is able to trace likely courses of seasonal mobility, through the integration of climatological, topographical and survey data into his GIS, and though he understands these places to have social and political significance, and to play an important structuring role in human interaction and the maintenance of social and political boundaries, he is unable to say much more than that there *was* some sort of interaction and there *were* political and social boundaries and that these boundaries were *variable*:

...this data suggest that societies of the Late Bronze Age living in the Koksuy valley were mobile pastoralists, whose lifestyle can be generally characterized by short migrations across a social landscape that placed them in upland pastures in the summer, and lowland settlements in the winter. This general pattern, however, was variable... The archaeological data suggests that the nature of these interactions was complex, and was motivated by economic, social, ritual, and political forces, which together generated a landscape that was constantly in flux, and which was constantly being redefined through a simultaneous consideration of various motivations.

Frachetti 2004: 432-433

This appreciation for the variability of mobility patterns and the possible significance of this variability in the creation of, and patterns of, regional variation and change within the wider phenomenon of the ACC is Frachetti's most concrete contribution. The degree to which this differs in kind and not simply as variations on a central theme or strategy is, however, unclear. Thus, one primary goal of his study, the goal "to delimit the ways societies manipulated and changed the local boundaries of their experienced landscape by recasting economic, ritual, political, and social experiences through regular forms of

social interaction...” (Frachetti 2004: 289-90)—remained unfulfilled. It simply lays beyond the scope of the data comprising his study to state *how* society functioned. Any attempt to do so would amount to nothing more than mere speculation, even if it were informed by ethnohistorical research—and to some scholars would be even the more suspicious for it. Like Miragliuolo, the picture produced by Frachetti’s study is categorically one from the outside, looking in on a system whose moving parts, while appreciated as such, are obscured by the opaque glass of the archaeological record. His data were lacking not in quantitative force so much as in their qualitative nature. Different data—or an incredible resolution of the archaeological record—would be required to identify sociopolitical boundaries, trace their evolution over time, and determine the specific sources of these changes.

The review of these two studies underlines a number of important points for this dissertation. First, an appreciation for the structural significance of segmentary lineage systems and their relationship to mobile pastoralism, as presented in this dissertation, for both Miragliuolo and Frachetti’s studies would have provided a useful heuristic to guide research strategies and serve as the basis for ongoing research questions even if such a model ultimately proved not to be a valid characterization of the societies in question in any particular period of study. For instance, one way in which Frachetti’s data could also have been approached is through the appreciation of a segmentary lineage system as a specific type of sociopolitical formation characterized by mobile pastoralism. In this context, the question of whether or not sociopolitical formations of segmentary lineage systems could be identified would have been interesting. Furthermore, the changing nature of low-land, semi-permanent winter settlements from sites of seasonal occupation

in the Bronze Age to more permanent occupation could be compelling in terms of a structural change and the sources of this change in behavior. Second, these two studies demonstrate that the identification of the relatively ephemeral remains of mobile pastoral populations is possible. At the same time, they demonstrate that this is much easier in landscapes and periods lacking any significant sedentary agricultural use of the landscape in question. Finally, they demonstrate that moving beyond a simple appreciation of the presence of mobile pastoral populations, or witnessing their evolution on either macro- or micro-scales, the explanation of such change at an ethnohistorical level of sociopolitical resolution, often a goal of archaeologists even if rarely realized, requires either an exceptional proliferation of archaeological data, or the presence of some other qualitatively different form of information on past sociopolitical systems, for instance, historical information.

A recent study undertaken as part of the Hirbemerdon Tepe Survey (HMTS) in Diyarbekir province in southern Turkey has addressed issues related to the preservation of mobile pastoral remains in ancient Mesopotamian landscapes (Ur and Hammer 2009). In order to assess the presence and preservation of mobile pastoral occupation sites in this area, Ur and Hammer undertook an intensive pedestrian survey of an area of 47 km<sup>2</sup>, historically known to have hosted mobile pastoral populations within the last millennium (2009: 38, 40). The results of their survey were largely successful in identifying traces of ancient mobile pastoral occupation in certain parts of their survey area and led them to make the following observations regarding the identification of similar structures in the Mesopotamian plain. First, they argued that “the assumption of nomadic invisibility is largely the result of the methods and geographic foci of traditional Mesopotamian



survey”, which were vehicular-based and focused primarily on the identification of larger, tell-based settlements as opposed to low or flat sites of archaeological significance (2009: 38). Secondly, they pointed out that these previous surveys tended to concentrate in ‘zones of destructions’—areas that are presently subjected to intensive agricultural activity and thus, obscured to the archaeological surveyor (ibid). Because of this fact, and the potential of EBA manuring activity in the form of sherd scatters to obscure subtle changes in artifact densities associated with mobile pastoral sites, Ur and Hammer advocated that the most appropriate places to search for the remains of such groups are “in areas that are of only marginal use for cultivation” (2009: 53). Thus, it cannot be assumed that the absence of campsites from presently-cultivated areas indicates they were never there. It will be necessary, then, to extrapolate wider chronological and geographical implications about the presence of such groups from more specific, intensively surveyed areas. This is made particularly difficult, though, by the relative dearth of appropriate surveys.

#### *Recapitulation: A Material Model of Segmentary Lineage Systems*

The material correlates of segmentary lineage systems that have been identified in this chapter can be divided into three categories: 1) those that relate to the sociopolitical system more or less directly, and those that relate to it by proxy, either through its cultural-structural relationships to 2) pastoralism or 3) mobility. These correlates can be organized on a further axis, on the basis of the level of archaeological resolution at which they appear, on a scale ranging from the particulate, artifactual level, to the architectural

**Table 4.1. Material Correlates of Segmentary Lineage Systems**

	<b>MOBILITY</b>	<b>MULTI-RESOURCE PASTORALISM</b>	<b>EGALITARIANISM</b>
<b>REGIONAL</b>	<p>Seasonality of settlement locations and architectural forms</p> <p>Sites on flat surfaces, sheltered from wind/weather, dry, inconspicuous</p> <p>Monuments such as cairns, tumuli, or standing stones dating to periods not associated with permanent settlements in their given areas</p>	<p>Proximity to pasturage, water sources</p> <p>Proximity to extractable resources to complement pastoral production</p>	<p>Similar domestic structure sizes and wealth of goods, relative to household size and functional differences related to seasonality of occupations</p>
<b>SITE-WIDE / ARCHITECTURAL</b>	<p>Low artifact density</p> <p>Low domestic structure density (10-30 m between domiciles)</p> <p>Camp-size dependent on ecology, demography, political context</p> <p>Elaboration relative to seasonality (climate) and duration of occupation</p> <p>Post-holes, hearths, stone outlines, platforms, benches, storage bins, storage pits, leveled floors, drain channels</p>	<p>Corrals</p>	<p>Little to no discrepancies in domestic structure size, quality, or form independent of household size</p> <p>Little to no discrepancies in mortuary space size or form relative to age and gender of deceased</p>
<b>ARTIFACTUAL / ECOFACTUAL</b>	<p>Relatively few material goods</p> <p>Ceramic use under certain circumstances</p> <p>Comparatively simple ceramic forms and production techniques</p> <p>Restricted number of ceramic forms: cooking and serving vessels</p> <p>Biological correlates of human mobility</p>	<p>Very small pots/herds resulting from herd traffic</p> <p>The presence of sheep and goat remains, though possibly underrepresented relative to their economic importance</p>	<p>Little to no discrepancies in quantity or quality of domestic goods, independent of household size</p> <p>Little to no discrepancies in grave good quality, quantity and type independent of age and gender of deceased</p> <p>Little to no population-wide discrepancies in health or diet</p>

level of the site, and finally, a regional or landscape level. This is demonstrated in table 4.1, above.

To some degree, the ethnohistorical sources used to construct this model will suffer from the presentist bias so often associated with such studies by more pessimistic or methodologically strict scholars. Nevertheless, despite the fact that all human behavior cannot be characterized by historically-attested groups—nor necessarily has even this variation been completely understood—it serves as a necessary starting point for archaeological inquiry into the past. Furthermore, the structural explanation of segmentary lineage systems offered in this dissertation transcends, to a certain extent, presentist bias through its *post-hoc* appreciation of those structures, to the extent that it satisfactorily explains the major features of the system. Nevertheless, it must be impressed again that any individual trait in the list above is not enough to identify a candidate society as possessing a segmentary lineage system. Instead, each case must be analyzed independently, giving weight not only to the archaeological features characterizing it, but also to the level of archaeological resolution available from the data, as well as historical documentation when available. A great degree of ambiguity characterizes most archaeological observations, such that a segmentary lineage classification is more often to be ‘not ruled out’ rather than ‘confirmed’. That being said, certain constellations of the features presented in figure 4.1 are more significant indicators of these systems than are others. Specifically mobility, especially as it can be demonstrated by the excavation of a mobile camp site, is highly necessary for the operations of segmentary lineage systems. The absence of indications of a significant agricultural nature are also especially significant, in light of the structural model

developed in Chapter 3. Material aspects thought to correlate with egalitarianism, on the other hand, can characterize sedentary, agricultural societies, sometimes even with significant aspects of political hierarchy when indications of that hierarchy are somehow masked or simply unidentified in the archaeological record.

Finally, it must also be cautioned that this material model of segmentary lineage systems, despite its similar form, should not be confused with the old, evolutionary trait lists for ascertaining levels of evolutionary development or sociopolitical complexity. No necessary developmental connection is being hypothesized for hunting-and-gathering, mobile pastoralism, or sedentary agricultural communities, nor is any technologically or ecologically deterministic perspective being pursued to the understanding of these societies. To the extent that the theory of the model of segmentary lineage systems laid out in this dissertation is technologically or ecologically deterministic, it is only to the extent that this determinism correlates with the structural explanation of the system as proposed in this dissertation. Although human societies are capable of overcoming a whole host of ecological and technological limitations, and though subsistence and political systems may vary independently of these factors, they do not always vary freely, and, in the case of segmentary lineage systems, the correlations are seemingly strong.

Although it will be argued that material evidence of mobile pastoral groups generally, and segmentary lineage systems more specifically are lacking in Syria during the EBA, this material model serves in one part to distinguish the indicators relevant to the approach to mobile pastoralism taken in this dissertation. It also serves as a reference by which to guide the analysis of future research into the archaeological record of EBA Syria with potential relevance to such groups. It remains now to continue the adaptation

of these material and sociological models to the EBA of Syria through a consideration of topographical and environmental features of that landscape.

AN ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE:  
A SEARCH FOR MOBILE PASTORALISM AND SEGMENTARY LINEAGE  
SYSTEMS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RECORDS OF  
EARLY BRONZE AGE SYRIA

PART II: ANALYSES AND CONCLUSION

by  
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## **Chapter 5**

### **The Material Context of the Early Bronze Age in Syria**

The following discussion has two primary purposes. The first is to establish the geographical and environmental character of the EBA landscape in Syria through reference to contemporary conditions and a variety of data sources relevant to ancient conditions. Although many datasets relevant to ancient climatic conditions in the eastern Mediterranean region and southwest Asia presently exist, few speak directly to EBA climatic patterns in inland Syria. Nonetheless, in recent years the discussion of third millennium climatic trends in this region has been characterized by an emerging consensus. This consensus characterizes the third millennium as a relatively moist and cool period, punctuated by dry-spells of increasing frequency by its end, and characterized by an overall trend of increasing aridification. The second purpose of this discussion is to review the modern conditions, both material and cultural, that characterize pastoral subsistence strategies in that region in contemporary and historical periods. This review will demonstrate that modern land use relating to pastoral exploitation results from specific historical contingencies and modern realities. These facts militate against the use of analogies relating second and early third millennium AD pastoralism and pastoral producers with EBA populations.

#### **Geography and Topography**

##### *Topography*

To complement and contextualize the archaeological review it is first necessary to review the geography and topography of the study area. The primary source of interest to

this study are the plains and steppes of Syria, consisting, in large part, of the Jezireh—the area of Upper Mesopotamia between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers—but also west of the Euphrates up to the uplands bordering the Mediterranean Sea coast. These plains occupy elevations between two hundred and six hundred meters above sea level. They are bounded on their western frontier, and consequently separated from the Mediterranean Sea and its promise of humidity and reliable rainfall, by a narrow but dramatic line of mountains exceeding one thousand meters in elevation. These stretch south from the Amanus to the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains, finding their southern extension in the Judean Hills. East of these mountains are a series of depressions including the valleys of the Orontes and Jordan Rivers and the Dead Sea. These depressions correspond to fault lines on the western edge of the Arabian plate, and are essentially a northern continuation of the Great Rift Valley in Africa. The western highlands, in their northern extensions, intersect with mountain ranges along the Turkish frontier. There, limestone bedrock rises up in southern Turkey to form the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains, separating the Syrian plains from the Anatolian plateau. From these boundaries the plains slope down to the south and east, being interrupted in the southern part of the country by a stretch of rugged highlands running southwest to northeast from the Anti-Lebanon Mountains to the Jebel ‘Abd el-Aziz. To the east of that range, and just across the Khabur River Valley, the Jebel Sinjar stretches east by northeast into Iraq, toward the Tigris River and Mosul. Except for a few volcanic peaks, the ridges of the Jebel ‘Abd el-Aziz and the Jebel Sinjar stand out as the only significant interruption in the landscape of the northern Jezireh. Elsewhere, black outcroppings of



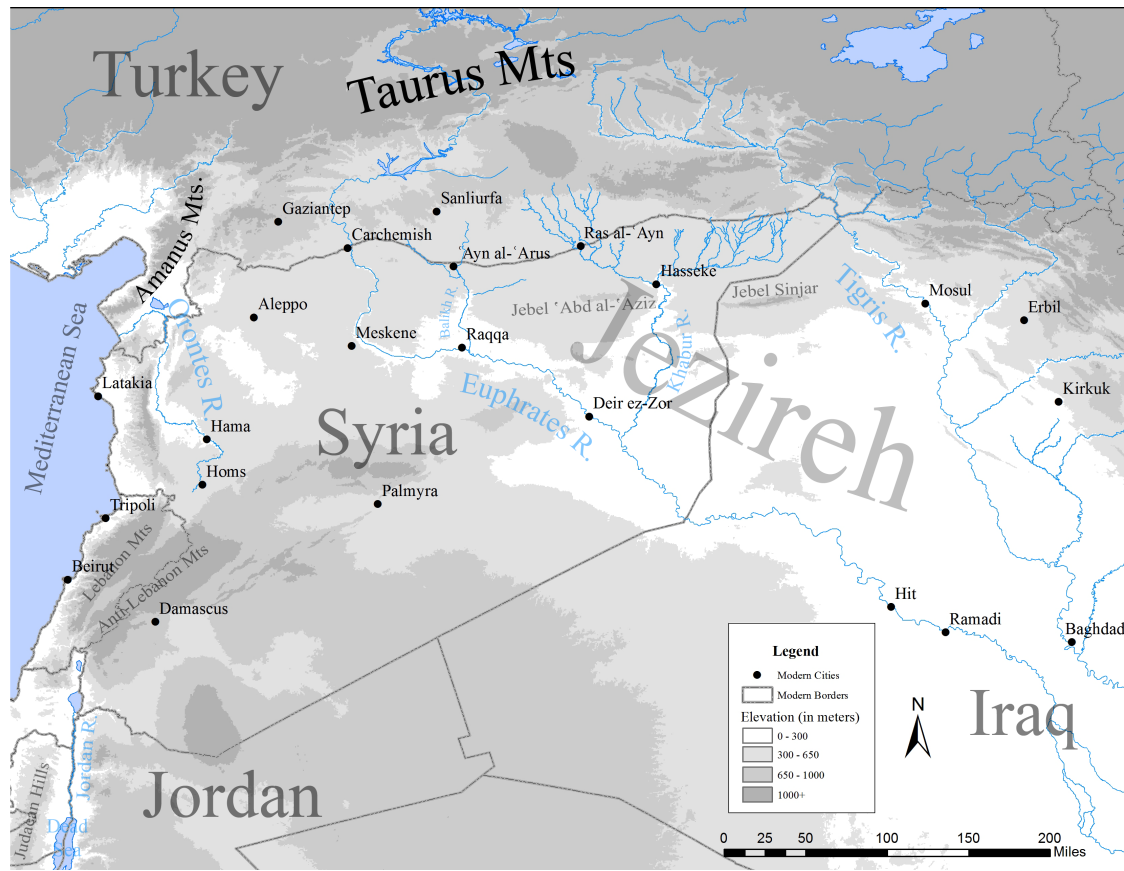
basalt throughout the landscape of the Syrian interior, on both sides of the Euphrates River, attest to volcanic activity there in the Pleistocene and early Holocene.

### *Hydrological Features*

The most significant hydrological features punctuating this plain are the Euphrates River and two perennial tributaries, the Balikh and Khabur Rivers and their associated drainages. The Euphrates flows through a valley throughout its length in Syria, having left a series of terraces at higher levels along the valley through a process of downcutting that seems to have been ongoing fitfully since the Pleistocene (van Liere 1960-1961: 8) and, according to once recent study, perhaps since the late Pliocene (Demir et al. 2008). Within the valley, the river has also undergone periodic phases of aggradation, during which it meandered across the valley floor (e.g. Moore et al. 2000: 44).<sup>130</sup> The Euphrates crosses from Turkey into Syria near Carchemish and flows in a primarily southerly direction for approximately one hundred kilometers before arcing to the east near the modern city of Meskene. The region of this eastward turn is sometimes referred to as the Big Bend or Great Bend of the river. The Euphrates has its confluence with the Balikh near the modern city of Raqqa, approximately 75 km east of this bend, from whence it flows in an arcing shape that begins eastward but turns progressively southerly as it approaches the Iraqi border. Approximately 175 km past Raqqa, the Euphrates meets the Khabur and, eventually, one hundred kilometers later, flows into Iraq where it turns sharply east. The river finally breaks out of its valley and spills onto the alluvial Mesopotamian plain in Iraq near Hit.

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<sup>130</sup> Most known EBA sites are confined to terraces above the flood plain, an unknown number of valley sites having been eroded away or aggraded over (Wilkinson 2004: 8). See discussion in Chapter 6.



**Figure 5.1. Major topographical features and locations discussed in Chapter 5**

The Euphrates derives its flow almost entirely from rain run-off, snowmelt, and springs fed by aquifers with their ultimate sources in southeastern Turkey. Therefore, it exhibits a pattern in the volume of its discharge tied to the seasonal oscillations of climatic conditions there. The Euphrates is at its lowest level in September but begins to rise gradually by November as a result of autumn rainstorms in southeastern Turkey. Its flow increases through December and eventually peaks in April as a result of snow melt—an inconvenient time for the traditional agricultural cycle. It then drops off progressively through the summer months.<sup>131</sup> The Balikh and Khabur River systems,

<sup>131</sup> For modern river discharge data see Kolars and Mitchell 1991: 108. In the last few decades the flow of the Euphrates has been much reduced and restricted by the construction of several hydroelectric dams in

though they are the two primary tributaries of the Euphrates, constitute only a small fraction of its flow as it passes into Iraq. Kolars and Mitchell calculated the average contribution of the Balikh and Khabur to be only 0.6% and 6%, respectively, to the total volume of that flow at the Iraqi border (1991: 167). Like the Euphrates, these two rivers receive only about 20% of their flows from precipitation run-off in the course of their flow through Syria, meaning that approximately 80% of their combined flows ultimately derives from southeastern Turkey.<sup>132</sup> Some of this precipitation runs on the surface south into the Syrian plains from the foothills of the Taurus Mountains, but the majority seeps into underground aquifers in Turkey that fuel constant discharges from a line of springs running west from the ‘Ayn al-Arus, the primary sources of the waters of the Balikh, east to the Ras al-‘Ayn, one of the largest springs in the world, at the head of the Khabur, and from thence, further east, south of the Turkish-Syrian border, to feed most of the major tributaries of the Khabur.

Both of these rivers are incised into the plains of the Jezireh, though neither as deeply as the Euphrates. The Khabur system differs significantly from the Balikh drainage, however, in the character of its northern reaches above the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz and Jebel Sinjar, a region sometimes referred to as the Upper or Northern Khabur basin (e.g. Wilkinson 2003: 104), the High Jezirah (Kolars and Mitchell 1991: 168), and the Khabur Triangle (Wilkinson et al. 2012: 142). This relatively well-watered region is most clearly defined by the flows of a number of perennial and seasonal water courses

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Turkey and Syria at Birecik, Carchemish, Tishreen, and Tabqa. The primary source of this reduced flow is evapotranspiration, which takes place not only at the surfaces of the impound lakes themselves, but also when these waters are used for irrigation, especially of summer crops (Kolars and Mitchell 1991). Parenthetically, the construction of these dams is responsible for both the high level of archaeological resolution available in these areas, and the impossibility of future research of many of the sites and landscapes mentioned in this and other chapters.

<sup>132</sup> Thus, approximately 98.6% of the flow of the Euphrates as it crosses the border into Iraq derives from precipitation events in Turkey (Kolars and Mitchell 1991: 234).

that eventually join the flow of the Khabur near the city of Hasseke. In its northern reaches, this plain spans just over two hundred kilometers east-west, and slightly more than half of that distance north-south. Modern flow restriction and irrigation in both Syria and Turkey has resulted in an artificially low flow and water table and so, in pre-modern times, flow and groundwater levels were likely much higher than today. The western third of the Khabur triangle is defined by limestone and dolomite subsurface strata that stretch due west, along the Syro-Turkish border, and constitute an excellent aquifer system which supplies many of the springs in the area (Kolars and Mitchell 1991: 175). The eastern two-thirds of the Khabur triangle is primarily characterized by much less permeable argillites, but nonetheless still benefits from the flow of numerous waterways (Kolars and Mitchell 1991: 175). Beginning in the fourth millennium BC, this area of the Jezireh hosted persistent periods of urban settlement (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 190). Throughout the area under consideration here, the plains of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia are also characterized by networks of wadis, draining mostly into the Euphrates River Valley. These wadis are sometimes represented on geographical and large-scale topographical maps. Although these wadis possibly carried large volumes of water during periods of higher rainfall, such as the early Quaternary Period (Fisher 1978: 39), they are perennially dry under current climate conditions.

### **Modern Environment and Land Use**

Although the climatological and ecological conditions of the third millennium BC were dynamic and are certain to have differed from the modern climate in some significant ways, an appreciation of the modern climate and land use is nevertheless a

concern. It is important to note, though, that modern and ancient ecologies and systems of land use will differ not only as the result of environmental differences, but also because of different economic, technological, and cultural conditions and the momentum of previous trajectories of change of all of these factors. Despite this, given broad similarity between the current conditions of intensive agro-pastoral production, and a similar strategy which developed by the middle of the third millennium BC, discussed below, modern sociopolitical conditions often serve as a model of first resort for archaeologists and historians, either explicitly or implicitly. Although such conversations are often careful to avoid technological anachronisms, they are nonetheless often blind to the possibility of sociopolitical, which is to say especially structural, anachronisms. Leaving aside, for the moment, the nature of EBA land use and the integration of agricultural and pastoral strategies, this section will relate modern ecological and economic conditions and land use patterns.

Much of the landscape of the Syrian interior can presently be defined as arid and semi-arid steppe and desert. A major reason for inland Syria's present aridity is the geographical and seasonal pattern of rainfall across the area. The primary source of rainfall derives from a winter flow of moisture from the Mediterranean Sea eastward across Syria and down through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf. The majority of this moisture is lost on the Syrian and Lebanese coasts, where high mountains cast a rain shadow over inland Syria. In this shadow, average rainfall and general humidity tend to decrease at fairly constant and regular rates towards the south and east. As aridity increases on the plains of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, so does inter-annual and local intra-annual variability in rainfall rates (e.g. Wachholtz 1996: 31; Wirth 1971, Karte 3

and Karte 4). The rain that does penetrate from the Mediterranean Sea coast begins to fall in October and continues through a winter growing season. Conversely, summers are characterized by southerly and southwesterly winds carrying hot, dry air from the Arabian desert.

Recently, the use of gas-powered electric pumps has expanded the agricultural potential of the more arid parts of the Syrian interior. Without access to such means of modern irrigation technology, though, rainfall is usually the limiting factor to successful agricultural practices in inland Syria (e.g. Szonyi et al. 2010; Wachholtz 1996). Under these conditions, the rates of agricultural returns in any given year are strongly correlated to rainfall totals. A commonly cited minimum annual rainfall total required for successful dry-farming is two hundred millimeters (Charles et al. 2003). This does not, however, translate to hard and fast boundaries for agricultural pursuits on the landscape. This relates in the first place to a certain degree to inter-annual variation. Particularly wet years can see the 200 mm isohyet move up to or even more than one hundred kilometers further inland than in dry years (Wirth 1971; Wachholtz 1996: 32-33; Jas 2000: 250-257). The nature of the dry-farming boundary also depends on a number of other variables, including the seasonal distribution of the rainfall, the nature of rainfall events, soil characteristics influencing humidity, as well as rates of evapotranspiration—which are themselves affected by a number of other climatic factors and are notoriously difficult to estimate (e.g. Badgley et al. 2015)—as well as specific local, micro-climatic and micro-topographical features. For instance, if soil quality is poor, rainfall rates would need to be higher. At the same time, if the water table were high or soils were particularly suitable to retaining moisture, much lower rainfall amounts could still sustain agricultural

pursuits. This has been observed in the beds of dry wadis or in river flood plains at the bottoms of valley systems where plant species have been observed growing well south of their usual boundary on the steppe (e.g. Geyer et al. 2007: 270-275). For these reasons the southern limit of rainfall agriculture has been described as diffuse (Jas 2000: 249-251). Thus, dry farming does not become impossible below the line of the 200 mm average annual isohyet, but rather it becomes riskier and more confined to especially suitable and increasingly rare ecological niches as rainfall rates decrease. The area in which agriculture may be practiced with a substantial risk of failure, but also a potential for significant returns, has been dubbed the 'zone of uncertainty' (Wachholtz 1996; Wilkinson et al. 2012).

In addition to contemporary climatological characteristics such as rainfall, soil quality, and topography, the specific nature of the environment will also result from a certain degree of momentum proceeding from shifting trajectories of environmental change. For instance, near the end of the last glacial period, approximately fifteen thousand years before present, climatic conditions were improving. Air temperatures, sea levels, and atmospheric levels of CO<sub>2</sub> rose, stimulating plant growth (Sage 1995). At that time, Levantine forests began to spread into the steppes surrounding the fertile crescent (Hillman 1996). At the beginning of the Younger Dryas, though, increasing aridity arrested this spread. Thus, while much of the area at the time could have hosted open woodlands, that vegetation type had only reached as far east as the Big Bend region of the Euphrates River. In addition to this natural momentum, human use of the landscape will have an effect on potential environmental characteristics and trajectories of change. For instance, in the Syrian steppe today, it has been observed that over-grazing has led to

desertification. Despite climatic potentials for vegetation cover, over-grazing precluded the growth of new plants and caused the formation of an arid crust of soil, resistant to the absorption of water (Wirth 1971: 132; Gintzburger 1999: 13). The environment, then, is often in a state of change, resulting both from natural climatic and geological processes and anthropogenic effects. Thus, there is likely to be a difference between the potential vegetative climax of a landscape and its actual state at any given moment in time.

The most complete study of the potential contemporary ecological climax in Syria and the Jezireh was carried out by Hillman and colleagues in relation to excavations at Abu Hureyra (Moore et al. 2000). Their study compared modern conditions to their potential climax, factoring out the anthropogenic effects of “deforestation, cultivation, and heavy grazing” (2000: 51). Hillman and colleagues divided the area under consideration here into seven different natural vegetation zones, drawing on eight different sources of data:

(1) studies of present-day vegetation, particularly in areas protected from intense grazing...; (2) rainfall levels... rather than isohyet contour maps, which are often inaccurate; (3) insolation and temperature levels, where available; (4) altitude and topography...; (5) solid geology and soil type...; (6) the relative density of villages and farmsteads on large-scale topographical maps predating the widespread availability of irrigation pumps...; (7) patterns of concentration of less ephemeral wadis...; and (8) the accounts of early travelers.

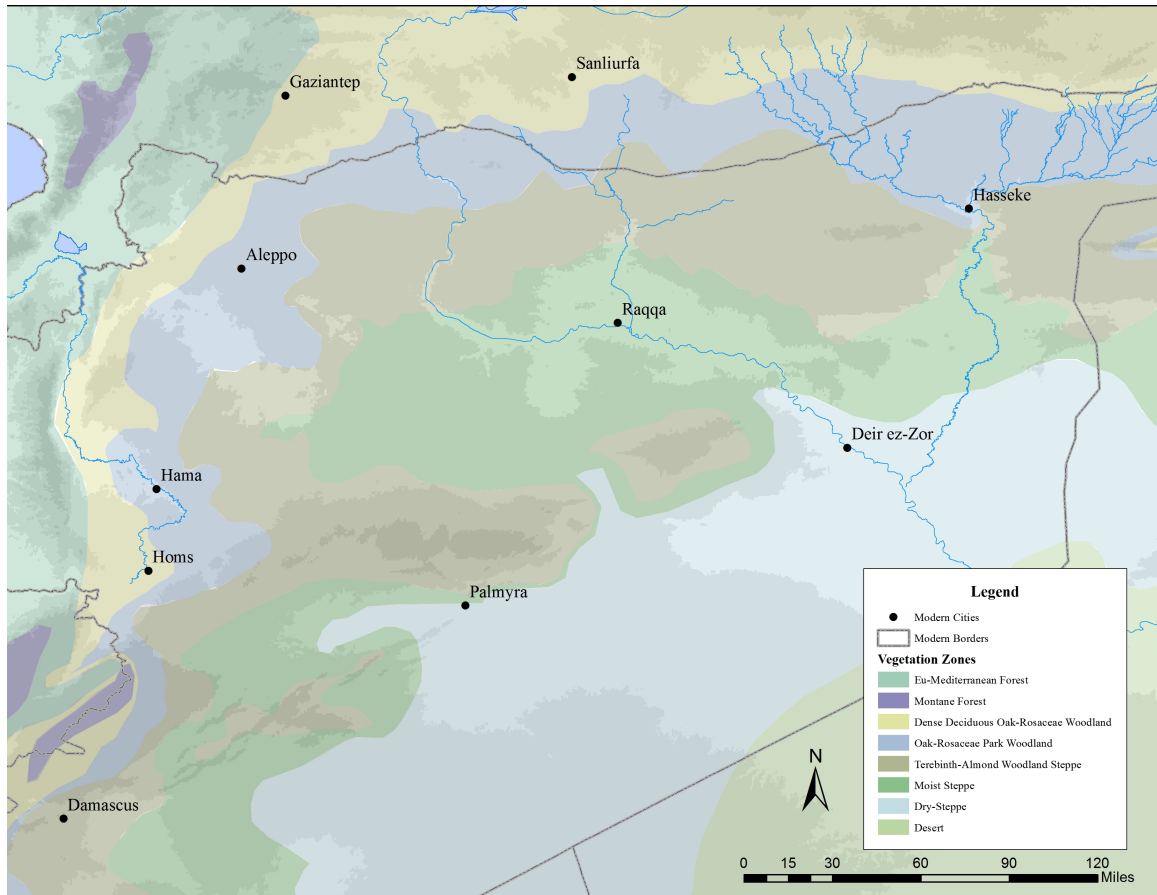
Moore et al. 2000: 50

Figure 5.2 is an adaptation of the one published in Moore et al. (2000: 50).<sup>133</sup> All of Hillman and colleagues’ zones, except desert (zone 6) indicate areas that would have been capable of supporting cereal and vegetable agriculture, with sheep and especially goat husbandry presumably predominating toward the drier steppe zones. While the

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<sup>133</sup> Discussions of all of these zones can be found in greater depth in Moore et al. (2000: 51-72).





**Figure 5.2. Adaptation of vegetation zones from Moore et al. 2000**

boundaries of their map as drawn are approximate, it should be noted that the authors took care to point that although the boundaries correlate generally with the shape of annual rainfall isohyets, these borders are not sharply delineated, but rather fade one into another as a result of gradually diminishing local ecological conditions as one moves towards true desert.

One of the outstanding features of Hillman and colleagues' study is the degree to which the contemporary environment had been degraded through human directed activities. The landscape of modern Syria has been suffering from increasingly deteriorating conditions as a result of agricultural and pastoral production strategies aimed at maximizing short-term productivity, especially in the last half-century, and also

climate change related to global warming. The factors behind overexploitation and resultant ecological degradation were thoroughly examined in a study of the relationship between Bedouin agropastoral productive systems in Syria and ongoing ecological degradation, carried out by Rolf Wachholtz in the late 1980s and early 1990s (1996). In his study, Wachholtz demonstrated that population growth since the 1960s, along with government policies aimed at sedentarization and agropastoral productive strategies for the arid parts of inland Syria, have resulted in high consumer demand for sheep products, especially meat and dairy products (1996: 26-28, 40-41). This demand, along with infrastructure improvements in arid areas, allowing for the easy transportation of food and water, the increasing availability of supplementary food sources for herds of sheep and goat, and the expansion of agricultural land, decreased the amount of range land available for herd pastures and encouraged the overgrazing of those pastures. These factors fundamentally changed the economic context of the Bedouin pastoral production system. Whereas in the middle of the twentieth century, wild growth in rangelands provided the majority of feed for small ruminant herds, during his study period Wachholtz observed that hand-feeding and the supply of secondary feed products predominated, while the dietary contribution of rangelands was only about 15% (1996: 33).<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, while the economic and subsistence significance of livestock to their herders used to be myriad, at the time of his study Wachholtz noted that “the bulk of animal products are marketed in order to obtain cash income” (1996: 87). Those

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<sup>134</sup> The economic system was so warped, in fact, that Wachholtz noted the use of bread as a supplementary animal feed source: “It is quite likely that the high prices of barley grain in 1990/91 resulted in the use of bread as an animal feed. While the sale of old bread to herders is illegal, it is difficult to prevent the sale of fresh bread for feeding purposes. The use of bread decreased in 1991/92” (1996: 74).

products of primary importance were live animals (for butchering), milk, and milk products, with wool, skins, and dung being only of secondary significance (1996: 87).

Whether implicitly or explicitly, there is a general sentiment among archaeologists that the modern situation of land use can be used, with some caution, as a model for EBA societies (Wilkinson 2003: 101). Many commenters have stressed the significance of pastoral production strategies, which have the potential to make use of steppe resources in drier areas or during drier seasons, as an economic hedge against shortfalls in agricultural production (e.g. Kolars and Mitchell 1991: 69; Kuzucuoğlu 2007: 461). This observation can carry the implication of similar agro-pastoral patterns of land use guided by similar intentions in the past. It must be noted, however, that modern economic systems are characterized by a number of significant technological differences that bear on this system. In this vein, Wachholtz's study is particularly significant in two respects. First, as he noted, the economic transformation that began in the 1950s would not have been possible without expanded infrastructure and technological improvements that allowed for the easy transportation of people, animals, and goods across the landscape (1996: 107). Second, the environmental degradation that he described also would not have been possible without this technology, the reason being that these pastoral productive strategies were essentially subsidized by the demands of a larger economy, relying on industries that were, to a large extent, insulated from deteriorating ecological conditions. Thus, while it is tempting to draw parallels between modern agropastoral practices and ancient periods, especially the EBA—a period of unprecedented urbanization and agricultural intensification in most of Syria and the Jezireh—there is a great potential for modern analogies to mislead. Any comparative exercise must be

tempered by exhaustive study of the technological conditions enabling and motivating contemporary uses of land.

In addition to technological anachronisms, caution also needs to be exercised with respect to potential sociopolitical and cultural differences between subject and source. The development of the contemporary economic system in Syria, described by Wachholtz, is clearly a result of government policies aimed at the sedentarization of mobile pastoral Bedouin populations (Wachholtz 1996: 26-28). Although his study lacks the necessary, specifically ethnographic clarity afforded by the examples studied in Chapter 3, it is very likely that this sedentarization resulted also from more indirect economic forces relating to a demand for pastoral products and competition between households. Before this time, the interior Syrian steppes were often understood to be largely under populated by sedentary, agricultural societies, largely given over to hosting mobile, pastoral populations and their herds and flocks. This was especially true before concerted agricultural expansion into tribal lands in the nineteenth century (Wachholtz 1996: 30-31). Thus, as Wachholtz noted, the Bedouin groups occupying the ‘zone of uncertainty’ in his study were the descendants of these ‘tribal’ populations. Again, though his study lacks the necessary ethnographic detail to establish this with certainty, it is likely that these groups originally possessed segmentary lineage systems and had been in a process of institutional change at least since the period of their sedentarization: “Today, tribes have little or no influence on the production activities of their members. Each Bedouin family, unlike in the past, represents an independent productive unit. Only in social and family life does tribal membership still have an influence” (1996: 28). This characterization appears somewhat at odds with the economic model of segmentary

lineage systems developed in Chapter 3. There it was argued that, indeed, each household is an independent producer, the structuring principles of the segmentary lineage system providing a certain security allowing independent assortment of economic relationships between households. Nevertheless, Wachholtz's observation that 'tribal' membership is primarily social, and the fact that blood feuds were outlawed in 1950 (Wachholtz 1996: 27), demonstrates the eroding nature of segmentary lineage systems in Syria, at least as a direct result of government intervention, by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century AD. Although Wachholtz provided few relevant details in his primarily economic study, it is possible to hypothesize that segmentary lineage systems was being undermined as well simply as a result of sedentary agricultural life, with concomitant structural friction, as explored in Chapter 3.

The environment of the inland steppe zones of modern Syria, then, can be characterized as arid and semi-arid steppe and desert. The diffuse boundaries between these zones result not only from inter-annual and local variability in rainfall, but are also due to contemporary and recent historical uses of the land that have degraded potential vegetation cover. Rainfall comes in sufficient amounts, on average, to permit dry land farming practices to succeed across a swath of territory that runs approximately one hundred and fifty kilometers south of the Turkish border. Beyond that point, pastoral activities tend to dominate and the steppe is increasingly less suitable for agricultural practices, although some especially favorable ecological niches do permit it. Conditions would be much more favorable to grazing and extensive pastoral production today, but the contemporary landscape suffers from over-grazing, to some extent as a result of modern demand for pastoral products, principally meat. The combination of agricultural

and pastoral pursuits in the modern economy, especially as one moves into the ‘zone of uncertainty,’ where annual variation in rainfall rates can lead to frequent lean years, permits a certain persistence of population density. The specific features of this economic and productive system, however, are dependent upon a number of modern technological features, among these are pump-irrigation, cars and trucks for transporting people, livestock, food, and water, and access to a cash economy. Furthermore, these societies can be characterized as ‘post-segmentary lineage systems—a result of their structuring principles having been supplanted by changing material and economic realities resulting from their sedentarization, thus transforming that ‘tribal’ system from a sociopolitical structure into one that is more purely social. Thus, in any ancient situation of agro-pastoral intensification, just as aspects of the modern system resulting from certain technological facts cannot be taken for granted, neither can the segmentary lineage (or more precisely, post-segmentary lineage) system of the population, resulting, as it does, from specific cultural and historical contingencies.

### **The Early Bronze Age Environment**

Presently, a broad consensus characterizes discussions on the climate of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia during the third millennium BC, allowing some cautious contextualization of human activities in the EBA. Despite this, there is still a significant degree of uncertainty with the ironic result that in some locations, at some times, the best environmental proxies are actually those same human activities that researchers seek to contextualize. Nevertheless, an emerging paradigm of the EBA climate in Syria suggests that it was a period of relative humidity, but characterized especially by the end of the

third millennium BC by a trend of short, moist intervals punctuated with periods of increasing aridification towards the end of the millennium.

The present consensus is based on an increasing preponderance of different types of climate proxy data, including  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  isotopic data from Greenland ice cores (Mayewski and Bender 1995; Cortijo et al. 2000; Shakleton et al. 2004) and petrographic tracers from North Atlantic sediment cores (Bond et al. 1997, 2001), both global proxy indicators, as well as datasets of regional significance such as multi-proxy records from the Mediterranean Sea (Luz and Perelis-Grossowicz 1980; Schilman et al. 2001, 2002), the Red Sea (Arz et al. 2003, 2006; Lamy et al. 2006; Riehl 2008; Edelman-Furstenberg et al. 2009), and the Gulf of Oman (Cullen et al. 2000), as well as various lake sediment cores<sup>135</sup>, combining stable oxygen and carbon isotope studies of lake sediments with pollen records, as well as micro- and macro-fossil remains from archaeological contexts<sup>136</sup>, sedimentological studies (Rosen and Goldberg 1995; Rosen 1997; Wilkinson 1999; Deckers and Riehl 2007), and, just in the past decade, stable carbon isotope analyses of charcoal and cereal crop remains (Fiorentino and Caracuta 2007; Riehl 2008; Riehl et al. 2008; Fiorentino et al. 2008; Masi et al. 2014; Riehl et al. 2014), which have been shown to vary according to water stress during annual growth periods (Ferrio et al. 2005).<sup>137</sup> This last type of analysis has the potential to provide an unprecedented degree

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<sup>135</sup> These include a large and constantly increasing body of studies. An incomplete list follows. Eski Acigöl: Roberts et al. 2001, Woldring and Bottema 2001/2002. Lake Van: Landmann et al. 1996, Lemcke and Sturm 1997, Wick et al. 2003, Litt et al. 2009. Zeribar: Hutchinson and Cowgill 1963, Freitag 1977, El-Moslimany 1987, Stevens et al. 2001, Wasylikowa et al. 2006. Mirabad: van Zeist and Bottema 1977, Griffiths et al. 2001, Stevens et al. 2006. Kinnereth (Sea of Galilee): Baruch 1986, Stiller et al. 2001, Hazan et al. 2005. Lake Tecer: Kuzu et al. 2011. Lake Nar: Jones et al. 2006. Lake Iznik: Ülgen et al. 2012.

<sup>136</sup> See, for example, van Zeist and Bakker-Heeres 1985, Willcox 1999, 2002, Pessin 2004, Deckers and Riehl 2004, 2007, and McCorriston 2007.

<sup>137</sup> Recent reviews of the particular sources of evidence and their relative reliability may be found in Finné et al. 2011 and Riehl et al. 2012.

of resolution to regional and chronological variations in crop growing regimes and rainfall rates.

These analyses, though, are subject to various limitations. First, there is the potential that climate proxies will be affected not only by climatic changes but also by anthropogenic factors. Pollen, for instance, is sensitive to anthropogenic variables such as agriculture and deforestation. Second, nearly all these datasets rely on calibrated radiocarbon dates to tie proxy indicators to estimated dates. Thus, there is no simple correlation of proxy indicators with absolute year dates with which to compare to historical events, or even as a basis to compare records drawn from different locations. This is particularly significant as the degree of local variation in environmental factors is potentially quite high. Multi-proxy records can, to some extent, overcome such limitations by providing different sources of data that are inherently chronologically correlated. For instance, oxygen isotopes reflect lake levels, and, indirectly, rainfall. Thus, changes in lake levels are thought to correlate strongly with climatic factors. In multi-proxy datasets that record both oxygen isotope data and pollen, contemporaneous data relevant to climatic and anthropogenic factors are inherently correlated, even if the significance of their relationship is not easily apprehended. A third potential limitation results from the fact that the best indicators of actual vegetation cover in a local area are micro- and macro-fossil remains (such as charcoal, seed remains, and food waste) in anthropogenic, i.e. archaeological, contexts. Preservation of these ecofacts, however, are highly influenced by human activity and cultural biases for particular species or processing methods can potentially skew environmental reconstructions, resulting in a high degree of uncertainty.



Despite these specific shortcomings, the broad outlines of the climatological and environmental picture that they present for the EBA are rather clear. Beginning at some time in the fifth millennium BC, the region witnessed a shift from the relatively humid conditions following the Younger Dryas toward increasing aridity (Finné et al. 2011: 3162; Riehl et al. 2012: 119). This general trend persisted throughout the Bronze Age with punctuated periods of increased aridity, the precise timing of which seems to have been regionally variable (for example, see citations in Finné et al. 2011: 3162). Evidence for increasing aridity in Upper Mesopotamia is especially attested at the beginning of the second half of the third millennium. Sedimentological studies of the wadi Jaghjagh, for instance, witness decreased flow around this time, suggesting decreased rainfall in the Khabur catchment zone in southeastern Turkey (Deckers and Riehl 2007). Stable carbon isotope analyses of plant remains from Ebla suggest the onset of an arid period there beginning around 2550 B.C. (Fiorentino et al. 2008). Around 2200 BC—give or take a century—many proxy datasets suggest a period of particularly rapid aridification (see discussion in Finné et al. 2011: 3162-3163). Although it has been previously hypothesized that this event was related to a catastrophic drought (Weiss et al. 1993, 2002), confirming evidence is lacking. Instead, Finné et al. have argued that climate proxy records “do not indicate anything as well-constrained in time or as unique in amplitude as would be expected for an event-like drought” (2011: 3163). This ‘event’ appears instead to be simply an extreme dry phase in a multi-centennial cycle of alternating humidity and aridity. It is clear that this period of extreme aridity was just one step in a long-term trend, as the area under study here witnessed a rapid process of aridification by about the end of the third millennium BC. Deteriorating environmental

conditions are also witnessed in botanical assemblages from archaeological contexts. Deckers and Riehl have estimated that Pistachio-almond woodland steppe—corresponding roughly with Moore and colleagues’ zone 4 (Hillman et al. 2000: 60; see figure 5.2, above)—which would have once reached south of Emar, was mostly gone from this area and the Khabur Triangle by the end of the third millennium, while oak park woodland began to retreat north at that time (2007: 498). It is difficult to know how much of this degradation was the result of climatic change and what was a result of anthropogenic effects—either or both could have played a significant role. Meanwhile, river and wadi flows seem to have become increasingly erratic and strong by the end of the third and into the second millennium BC, either as a result of drought or increasing aridification (Riehl et al. 2012: 124).

The greatest uncertainty in the above reconstruction relates to inter-annual, or even inter-decadal variability in rainfall regimes, their variability across the region under study, and their correlation with phenomena recorded in the archaeological record. This uncertainty is attributable to a number of different factors. First, the region under study is not very well represented in climate proxy studies. Thus, the degree of local variability in inter-annual rainfall regimes or other access to water is unclear. A second difficulty is identifying climatically forced changes from proxy data and then correlating these (usually) accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) radiocarbon-dated proxy climatological indicators with similarly dated archaeological contexts, or provisionally assigned calendar dates from historical data, in an effort to study the relationship between climatic variables and changes in human societies. Recently, though, stable carbon isotope analyses of archaeobotanical remains are starting to fill in these gaps. A third difficulty

relates again to dating events in proxy data. For instance, if two different datasets record drought-like events around the same time, do they indicate one event—a result of imprecise or inaccurate dating—or do they actually indicate two separate events? Or is it possible that they indicate different conditions at different places (and possibly at different times), resulting from interregional climatic variability? Ultimately, these difficulties have led to disagreement regarding the specific influence of climatic phenomena on human societies, especially apparent urban collapses, or disintegrations, that took place mainly at the end of the EBA.

Nevertheless, as the review in Chapter 6 will show, sedentary EBA settlement sites, especially from the latter few centuries of the third millennium, have been identified in ideal micro-climatic zones below the present-day 200 mm isohyet. Much of the landscape could have potentially provided rich grazing grounds able to host large herds of small ruminants in the long-term, if appropriately managed. Although there is still debate on the precise role played in changing settlement systems by deteriorating environmental conditions in the final centuries of the third millennium, much of the EBA can be characterized as being more humid, with more lush vegetative cover than current conditions, and as being generally more favorable to agricultural, pastoral, and for that matter, hunting and gathering subsistence strategies. Results of archaeozoological analyses of EBA contexts in Syria confirm the presence of pastoral activities. The question which remains to be addressed, then, is the nature of the relationship between agricultural and pastoral producers. Can any independent, habitually mobile pastoral groups be identified in the archaeological record? It remains now to test the sociological model developed in Chapter 3 and the material model developed in the previous chapter

against the archaeological and historical records of EBA Syria in attempt to ascertain the likelihood of the presence or absence of mobile pastoral, and hence, potentially segmentary lineage societies during that period and to determine, as far as is possible, the role that such groups played in the pattern of urban integration and disintegration which characterized that period.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Segmentary Lineage Systems in the Early Bronze Age**

#### **Archaeological Record of Syria**

An examination of the ethnohistorical record in the first part of this dissertation 1) established a model of segmentary lineage systems, 2) demonstrated their potential relevance for mobile pastoralism in general, especially in a pre-modern period, and, hence, for EBA Syria, and 3) identified various factors in the history of western scholarship that have obscured these two preceding points. In Chapter 4, a material model was adapted from that sociological model with reference to some of the material realities of the EBA in Syria. In the previous chapter, this consideration was expanded to include information pertaining to the ancient climate and landscape. These two models will now be applied to the archaeological record of EBA Syria. This application will have two complementary purposes. First, it will test for the presence of segmentary lineage societies and, if possible, to draw conclusions about the nature of pastoral production at that time, and the role played by mobile pastoral populations during the EBA in Syria. Second, it will evaluate the strength of previous arguments relating to mobile pastoralism and its sociopolitical effects at various points in EBA Syria. The locations of major sites mentioned in this chapter are depicted in figure 6.1.

#### **Introduction**

In the past fifteen years, the assumption that mobile pastoral populations existed in various parts of Syria at different points during the EBA has become broadly adopted among archaeologists of the ancient Near East, though the nature of these populations,

and their significance for the course of EBA history, has not been characterized by any broad consensus or specific sociopolitical model. Instead, the increasingly ubiquitous arguments for, and assumptions of<sup>138</sup> (e.g. Cooper 2006: 40), the existence of mobile pastoral groups have been forthcoming from different places and have been made on a wide variety of bases of material evidence. For instance, despite a paucity of evidence, Giorgio Buccellati has argued that ‘tribal’ Amorites developed from a process of tribe formation in the steppe that paralleled that of state formation over the course of the EBA, only gaining their ‘nomadic’ character secondarily, after the collapse of urban societies at the end of the EBA (2008).<sup>139</sup> As will be reviewed in detail in this chapter, the existence of such groups is often assumed, implicitly on the basis of historical observations of mobile pastoral groups in the modern era, without any, or with only a minimally critical approach to ethnographic literature. It has been argued in previous chapters that such applications of modern parallels to ancient examples is inadvisable. It is one of the factors underlying the *a priori* rejection of the validity of segmentary lineage systems for the investigation of mobile pastoralism in EBA Syria.

The results of the analysis carried out in this chapter will demonstrate that hypotheses of the presence of mobile pastoral groups in the archaeological record of EBA Syria have been made both on the basis of material evidence and sociological assumptions that, when compared to the critical sociological and material models developed in Chapters 2 through 4, with reference to a critical review of the ethnographic

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<sup>138</sup> The growing acceptance of the assumption that ‘tribal’ groups, with an ambiguous relationship to mobile pastoralism, must have been in existence at least at some point, or in some places in EBA Syria has no doubt also influenced, and been influenced by, a parallel development among scholars of the texts from Ebla, as will be explored in Chapter 7.

<sup>139</sup> As demonstrated in Chapter 3, this hypothesis fails to recognize the significant structural differences that characterize mobile pastoral, segmentary lineage societies from sedentary societies, even when those are rural and not qualified by any significant degree of sociopolitical hierarchy, by conflating them both as ‘tribalism’ on the basis of a non- or anti-state or anti-hierarchy characteristic.

record, are unsupportable. Material evidence is equivocal and assumed correlates of segmentary lineage systems are often speculative at best. When these latter do sometimes indicate a cultural correlate of such systems, it is never in the presence of other correlative features that would strengthen the analogy in support of such an interpretation. Most significantly, evidence of such correlates drawn from sedentary sites are largely irrelevant. In short, I will argue that no clear material evidence of mobile pastoral—and especially no specifically segmentary lineage societies—has yet been identified for any place, at any point during the EBA in Syria. This state of the material evidence stands in stark contrast to the MBA, when such evidence appears in relative abundance. This latter observation suggests the possibility that the absence of evidence of mobile societies in the archaeological record of the EBA is not simply an artifact of preservation, but is rather indicative of the absence of such groups in fact.

#### *A Note on Chronological Systems of Syria in the Early Bronze Age*

Models of EBA sociopolitical history are hampered by chronological difficulties, most often relating to the relative ordering of events and the correlation of results from excavations between sub regions. This is especially the case in early periods of the EBA. The production of a unified relative and absolute chronology for the third millennium BC is currently being pursued by the Associated Regional Chronologies of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (ARCANE) project. To date, that program has published two regional chronologies, the Early Jezireh periodization (EJ), relating to the Jezireh region of Syria, not including sites in and near to the Euphrates River Valley, and the Early Middle Euphrates periodization (EME), including sites from the Euphrates

River Valley between Terqa and the Karababa basin, in Turkey (Lebeau, ed. 2011; Finkbeiner et al., eds. 2012).<sup>140</sup> These two systems are not inherently related to one another, chronological divisions being made primarily on the basis of considerations of material changes specific to those regions. Both systems have been related to calibrated radiocarbon dates on the basis of multiple samples and so a rough comparison between these two systems can be offered, though it must be emphasized that such a correlation is provisional and has not yet been the focus of any overt effort on the part of the ARCANE project. For the sake of convenience, these two systems are compared in table 6.1, below.<sup>141</sup>

Discussions of EBA Syria have previously been dominated by two chronological systems: an EBA system for western Syria and the western Jezireh and the adoption of southern Mesopotamian historical periods for the eastern Jezireh (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 215, fig. 7.3). The first is a traditional division of the EBA into five (and sometimes six) phases, EB I, II, III(a and b), IVa, and IVb. There is little consensus on where most of the boundaries between the earlier phases should be drawn, in terms of cultural materials, political and social significance, and calendar year dates. In Syria, the EB I phase is generally considered to begin with the disappearance of the Uruk-related material culture that was nearly ubiquitous throughout the region and dominated discussions of Chalcolithic society, if not always the material assemblages of Chalcolithic sites (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 197-203). On the basis of radiocarbon dates from

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<sup>140</sup> Note, though, that the radiocarbon sample size relating to the EME periodization is not particularly robust (Finkbeiner and Novák 2015: 15).

<sup>141</sup> Although the ARCANE system does not currently encapsulate all sites under discussion here, nor are contexts from sites between the two regions easily compared, being the most exhaustively constructed chronological system it will serve to anchor the proceeding discussion. It is maintained here that, despite these shortcomings, the general trends of major sociopolitical developments can be clearly identified in the EBA.



throughout the area of the Uruk Expansion, this disappearance is generally considered to have taken place between 3300 and 3000 BC (e.g. Dyson 1987: 677; Willkomm 1992; Behm-Blancke 1992: 12-18; Frangipane 1993: 49; Kohlmeyer 1993: 48; Zaccagnini 1993: 19; Calderoni et al. 1994: 147; di Nocera 2000; Weiss 2003: 595; Ristvet 2011: 322; Deckers et al. 2015: 448, table 2). The divisions between EBA I, II, and III are unclear, though Schwartz suggested EB III might generally be equated with Amuq H (2007: 48-49). In contrast to the earlier subdivisions, the EBA IVa is usually correlated with the material sequence of Amuq I. This correlates it primarily with Mardikh IIB1 (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 243). Thus, EB IVA is the period of urbanization and hierarchical sociopolitical development corresponding to Ebla's Palace G and its archives. EB IVb commences with the destruction of Ebla's Palace G and, hence, Mardikh IIB2 (and Amuq J) and characterizes the final cultural phase of the EBA, defined by settlement discontinuities, deurbanization, and increasing regionalism.

Chronological discussions in the eastern Jezireh have traditionally made reference to historical periods of southern Mesopotamia, relating them to various material indicators. Thus, EBA strata were usually related to the Early Dynastic (ED I, II, IIIa, IIIb) system, with all of its ambiguities, or by reference to the Akkadian, Gutí (post-Akkadian), and Ur III periods (Lebeau 2000: 168), distinctions between all of which are rather ambiguous on material bases. The EJ and EME systems, because they constitute internally consistent systems made on the basis of intense regional observations drawing from, for the most part, robust databases, will form the basis for the following discussions.

Calendar	EJ	Historical	EBA	EME	Calendar
1925				EME 6	1925
1950					1950
1975					1975
2000	EJ 5 ?	Third Dynasty of Ur	EB IVb		2000
2025					2025
2050					2050
2075					2075
2100				2100	
2125				2125	
2150				2150	
2175	EJ 4c	Post-Akkadian Gutian		2175	
2200				2200	
2225	EJ 4b	Akkadian		EME 4	2225
2250					2250
2275					2275
2300	EJ 4a				2300
2325					2325
2350			2350		
2375	EJ 3b	ED IIIb	2375		
2400			2400		
2425			2425		
2450	EJ 3a		EB IVa		2450
2475					2475
2500				2500	
2525		2525			
2550		ED IIIa		EME 3	2550
2575					2575
2600	2600				
2625	EJ 2	ED II*	2625		
2650	EJ 1		ED I	2650	
2675				2675	
2700		2700			
2725		2725			
2750		2750			
2775		2775			
2800		2800			
2825		2825			
2850		2850			
2875		2875			
2900		2900			
2925		2925			
2950		2950			
2975		2975			
3000	EJ 0?	Jemdat Nasr	EB I, II, and III	3000	
3025				3025	
3050				3050	
3075				3075	
3100				3100	
3125				3125	
3150				3150	
3175				3175	
3200				EME 1	3200
3225					3225
3250					3250
3275					3275

**Table 6.1. EBA Chronological Systems**

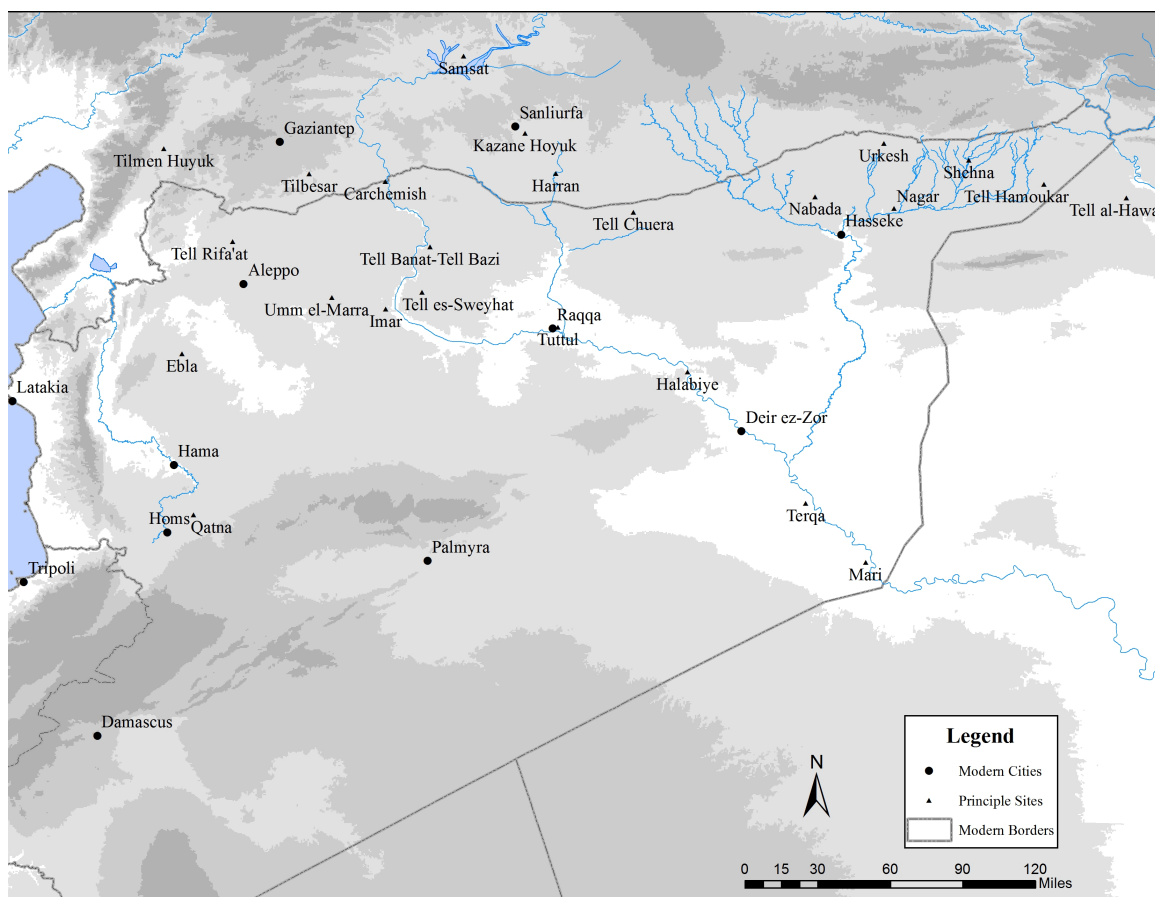
## **Wool Fiber, Pastoralism, and the Uruk Expansion Phenomenon**

Although the Uruk Expansion is, strictly speaking, a Chalcolithic event and therefore somewhat beyond the limits of this study, the question of the legacy of this southern influence on the course of events in Syria, and especially the Jezireh, during the EBA is relevant, nonetheless. This is especially because that expansion, its collapse, and the foundations of new early EBA settlement in some parts of Syria after this shift has sometimes been explained in terms of pastoralism (McCorriston 1997) and even specifically mobile pastoralism (Porter 2012: 88). A relationship between Uruk material culture and sheep/goat pastoralism has been established at many, though not all, Uruk Expansion sites. The mobile character of this production, though, and hence the nature of its integration with other subsistence and economic pursuits, has not been established. Because it is ostensibly bound up with the nature of this phenomenon, it is appropriate to review the relevant aspects of that phenomenon here.

The nature of the Uruk Expansion is subject to myriad interpretations. The phenomenon derives its name from the fact that it is associated with the appearance of architectural styles, ceramic forms, writing, and other aspects of material culture usually associated with southern Mesopotamia—at that time dominated, at least demographically, by the ‘type site’ of Uruk—throughout the Near East, including Syria, southeastern Anatolia, Northern Iraq and parts of the western Zagros Mountains.<sup>142</sup> The most common features of this southern material repertoire found in the zone of this expansion are ceramic, and include wheel-made forms (see Schwartz 2001: 242-243 and his figures 7.5 and 7.6) and the application of reserved-slip. The most ubiquitous ceramic

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<sup>142</sup> This type of ‘expansion’ or ‘intrusion’ phenomenon is not unprecedented. Southern forms in the north have also been detected with the preceding Ubaid material culture period (Oates 1993).



**Figure 6.1. Principal sites discussed in Chapter 6**

correlates of this period, though, are the curiously crude and apparently mold-made beveled rim bowls.<sup>143</sup> In addition to ceramic features, some sites show evidence of Uruk architectural influence. For instance, the ‘Eye Temple’ at Tell Brak has a familiar Mesopotamian niched and buttressed tripartite plan and clay cone decoration (Mallowan 1947). The most overt specimens of southern buildings and construction techniques, though, are found along the Euphrates, north of the Big Bend, in Syria and Turkey, at sites like Habuba Kabira (Strommenger 1980; Sürenhangen 1986), Jebel Aruda (van Driel and van Driel-Murray 1983), and Sheikh Hassan (Boese 1995). Additionally, at

<sup>143</sup> They also appear to be the most widespread aspect of this material assemblage in both space and time, appearing at Hama K, and in late phase F and early phase G Amuq sites (Schwartz 2001: 241-242).

Habuba Kabira excavators unearthed clay numerical tablets, bulla, and cylinder seals and sealings. While these sites have often been called ‘colonies’, Uruk influence is not so total in the Khabur and other parts of this zone of influence, where related artifacts are found in concentrated areas within sites—for example at Hacinebi Tepe where such a zone is interpreted as a southern ‘enclave’ (Stein 2001)—or are spread more diffusely throughout indigenous material culture. Surveys of the Balikh River Valley, though, show a relative paucity of Uruk-related material culture and a profusion of LC sites with indigenous material culture (Curvers 1990: 194-195). Meanwhile, a survey of the Euphrates River Valley east of Raqqa noted the existence of Uruk material at sites of regularly placed intervals (Kohlmeyer 1984). In any event, the manifestation of this Uruk Expansion clearly varied regionally, and where excavations have exposed relevant LC levels, they show some degree of variation also site by site within a region. The western limit of this zone of Uruk material influence in Syria seems to have been the Euphrates Valley, though some beveled rim bowls and reserved slip wares have been identified further west.<sup>144</sup>

Guillermo Algaze has suggested that the Uruk Expansion can be explained by the contemporaneous appearance of state societies in southern Mesopotamia. He has argued that, lacking many important natural and luxury resources, ambitious elites and institutions in Southern Mesopotamia would have had to seek those resources outside the alluvium. Rather than arguing that all of the Uruk Expansion sites should be understood to have fulfilled a similar function in this system, or that they grew up as a result of concerted and overt pressure, Algaze has instead argued for a variety of different types of

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<sup>144</sup> One interesting exception to this border is the site of El-Kowm 2-Caracol, located northeast of the Palmyra basin in the el-Kowm oasis. Faunal remains there testify to a specialized economic strategy focusing on the exploitation of wild gazelles (Cauvin and Stordeur 1985).

sites, resulting from different sorts of interactions, and he has maintained that this system grew up ‘organically’, constituting a sort of ‘informal empire’ (1986, 1989, 1993, 2001, 2008). The general outlines of this theory are compelling, but the relative paucity of relevant excavated contexts in the alluvium of southern Mesopotamia creates much room for disagreement. Many scholars have offered critiques and refinements of various aspects of Algaze’s Uruk World System. Schwartz summarized three primary criticisms:

(a) evidence of economic and societal complexity in the periphery and thus the improbability of an asymmetric relationship between southern Mesopotamia and its neighbors (Rothman 1993; Stein, Bernbeck et al. 1996), (b) little evidence of peripheral raw materials in the core or of Mesopotamian finished goods in the periphery (Algaze 1989 and comments; J. Oates 1993), and (c) the likelihood that some sites interpreted as colonies (e.g., Brak, Nineveh) were local centers emulating southern Mesopotamian elite culture (Lupton 1996: 68; Schwartz 1989; Stronach 1994; Wattenmaker 1990).

Schwartz 2001: 256

One compelling interpretation of some of the Uruk Expansion sites is that they are not primarily the result of trade activities, but rather represent the resettlement of populations from the southern alluvial ‘core’ into the Syrian ‘periphery,’ as Schwartz has suggested for the settlement at Habuba Kabira (2001: 260). In a similar vein, Johnson has previously argued that the Late Uruk period was characterized by political turmoil in the alluvium and suggested that Syrian colonies were actually refugee communities (1988-89).

Another hypothesis suggested that the Uruk Expansion was driven more specifically by a demand for wool fiber in the southern alluvium (Wright 1989; McCorriston 1997). McCorriston has argued that increasing archaeological and historical data point to an emphasis on wool production throughout the zone of the Uruk Expansion, concurrent with a decline in the use of flax for fiber production in the

southern alluvium (1997: 521). At the time when she made this argument, the only Syrian sites where evidence of this specialization had been identified were Jebel Aruda (Buitenhuis 1988) and Umm Qseir south of Hasseke (Zeder 1994: 116), both located in the zone of uncertainty. By contrast, the indigenous sites of Hacinebi Tepe and pre-contact Arslantepe in the safer dry-farming zone of southeastern Anatolia followed more diversified systems of production (Stein 1999: 132). During a phase of Uruk influence at Arslantepe, though, a period when the site was nevertheless dominated by indigenous material culture, but also showing signs of increasing complexity and the presence of an elite group that seems to have borrowed southern symbols of political hierarchy, a shift towards sheep and goat husbandry and away from more diversified strategies is clearly detectable (Frangipane 2001: 4). Nevertheless, at Hacinebi Tepe, where an Uruk enclave has been detected, clear differences between the local indigenous contexts and Uruk contexts have been detected. While a diversified strategy continues to characterize the indigenous community, the Uruk enclave demonstrates a much higher degree of caprid remains (Stein et al. 1996: 258-260). Additionally, just upstream from Carchemish, evidence from the Turkish sites of Zeytinli Bahçe Höyük and Hassek Höyük demonstrate the increased importance of sheep and goat rearing during the latter part of the Uruk period compared with Neolithic and later EBA patterns of diversification (Frangipane 2007: 135).<sup>145</sup> The detection of pre-Uruk caprid specialization at Tell Brak (Emberling et al. 1999: 29) indicates, at least at that site, that this economic strategy was not unknown before the Uruk Expansion.

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<sup>145</sup> Hassek Höyük at this time has been characterized as an Uruk colony. At Zeytinli Bahçe Höyük, though, the excavator has associated this phase with an indigenous emulation of Middle Uruk material culture following a hiatus from the earlier Uruk levels (2007: 128-129).

Thus, the relationship between Uruk influence and caprid specialization is not yet clear. A pattern of specialization near and below the 250 mm isohyet—and diversification in the reliable dry-farming region—would be consistent throughout most of the EBA, and suggests in the case of some Uruk sites that this correlation could be simply a secondary result of their location. Given the effect of Uruk influence further north, in the dry-farming belt in southern Anatolia, though, the possibility that Uruk colony sites are found in this area precisely because it was conducive to pastoral exploitation must be considered. It is also possible that an Uruk preference for caprid protein over alternative local sources was culturally inspired. Porter has recently offered a detailed interpretation of the Uruk Expansion phenomenon that attempts to explain some of its peculiar nature through reference to mobile pastoral populations and an evolution of specialized pastoral production that began in the southern alluvium (2012: 137-163). Porter's explanation, though, is simply speculation—it is a mobile pastoral reading of the material record, where many readings are possible. It must be pointed out that she cited no physical evidence of mobile populations on the landscape at this time, giving the impression that all LC pastoral producers were anchored to sedentary sites. The same sites all played host to complex sociopolitical populations subject to considerations of geographic propinquity and structures of inequality, which would, if not preclude, then at least complicate any segmentary lineage system. Even if mobile pastoral populations pre-existed the emergence of these sedentary sites of occupation, with their sedentary power structures, these would have the potential to corrupt such systems. In fact, whatever the role(s) played by Uruk influence(s), there seems to be an inverse relationship at that time between an emphasis on sheep and goat, and perhaps



wool production, and the development of sociopolitical complexity. Given the historical connection between textiles and economies of redistribution associated with sociopolitical complexity during historical periods in Mesopotamia, though, such as in the archives of Ebla's Palace G, this observation should not be surprising.

It is easy to imagine myriad ways in which 'Uruk' ideologies and institutions could have infiltrated the polities of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, depending on the nature of interactions between northern populations with expatriate southerners, be they refugees, merchants, missionaries, craftsmen, soldiers, despots, some combination thereof, or even if the southerners were colonists of otherwise empty landscapes in some cases. Suffice it to say here that there is widespread evidence of indigenous political complexity and nascent social hierarchies at various sites in this area of Uruk influence in both the earlier and latter periods of the LC (e.g. Ball, Tucker, and Wilkinson 1989; Eidem and Warburton 1996; Stein 2001; Frangipane 2001). Thus, any interactions between these populations are likely to have been complex and cannot be understood *a priori* to have been too imbalanced, either economically or culturally. The agency of all groups involved is likely to have been expressed in these interactions in ways too complicated for all of their subtleties to be detected in the archaeological record. Nevertheless, the state of the evidence seems to support the conclusion that pastoral activities at this time were grounded in locations of long-term sedentary occupation and subject to relationships of significant sociopolitical inequality.

### **Grain Surplus in the ‘Zone of Uncertainty’**

Some of the earliest physical evidence from the EBA that has been cited in support of the presence of mobile pastoral groups, and thus potentially segmentary lineage systems, stems from the discovery of large-capacity grain storage silos in early EBA levels at Tell Hajji Ibrahim in the Tabqa Dam salvage zone, near Tell es-Sweyhat (Danti 1997, 2000), and at the sites of Tells al-Raqa’i (Schwartz 2015), Kerma (Saghieh 1991), and al-Atij (Fortin 1989, 1995, 2000) in the Middle Khabur salvage region, south of Hasseke (Hole 1991, 1999). This argument stemmed initially from the observation that these silos, at capacity, held more grain than that needed to satisfy the annual subsistence requirements of the populations thought to inhabit these sites, as inferred from ethnographic observations relating site areas and population sizes (Schwartz 1994). The assumption that these silos would have always operated at or near capacity, though, is untenable. When a more likely expectation of harvest sizes is ascertained, it is found to approximate probable settlement population sizes. The apparent over-sized nature and presence of these silos, especially in the ‘zone of uncertainty’, is more readily explained by the degree of inter-annual variability in rainfall and, thus, the inter-annual variability of agricultural productivity that sedentary populations would have experienced there. Grain storage capacity in excess of nutritional and agricultural needs was intended to take advantage of more productive years, as a hedge against less productive or even famine years, when reduced crops or no crops could be harvested. Despite disagreement among scholars concerning the precise values of the climatic, demographic, and agricultural variables needed to compute the nutritional magnitude of these storage silos relative to the sizes of site populations and cultivated fields, basic relationships can be modeled

through simple equations. The impression given by this analysis is not of small communities producing large agricultural surpluses (contra Danti 2000), but rather of self-sufficient, sedentary agro-pastoral communities in the ‘zone of uncertainty’ during the early EBA.

### *Tell Hajji Ibrahim*

Tell Hajji Ibrahim is a .25 ha, square-shaped mound protruding 2.6 m above the surrounding ground surface level, located some 900 m southeast of Tell es-Sweyhat (Danti 2000: 105-106). Excavations there uncovered evidence of three phases of occupation, of which the earliest phase, A, was the best preserved and dated to the very beginning of the EBA, as corroborated by ceramic finds—including beveled-rim bowl sherds—and calibrated dates derived from radiocarbon analysis (Danti 2000: 168-186). During this phase, occupation of the tell was characterized by a single ‘enclosure’ consisting of a main house, courtyard area, and miscellaneous other structures encircled by an enclosure wall, and possibly a neighboring, extramural domicile (Danti 2000: 108-121). For at least part of the timespan of phase A2 the site included two structures, certainly grain silos, which were likely to have been in at least partially contemporary use (Danti 2000: 121-123). On the basis the dimensions of these two silos, Danti projected that there was “enough grain after supplemental [livestock] feeding to ration 19 people at 250 kg/person per year,” and furthermore, “annual dairy and meat production would provide for another 20 to 30 people for a total population of 39 to 49 people sustainable per average year” (2000: 131-132), while the compound itself would account for fewer than ten long-term residents (2000: 114). Thus, Danti understood agropastoral activities

at Tell Hajji Ibrahim to have produced a substantial nutritional surplus. He subsequently used this fact to argue for the presence of “seasonally transhumant groups” in the area at the time (2000: 303). Beyond the lack of independent evidence indicating the existence of such a use for such a surplus, two fundamental flaws invalidate Danti’s conclusion. First—leaving aside any debate regarding the values he choose for the variables needed to compute the agricultural and pastoral productivity of the site—Danti’s calculation is simply wrong. Second, Danti assumes that the silos found at Tell Hajji Ibrahim in Phase A2 were designed to be filled to full volumetric capacity following a harvest in a year of average agricultural productivity. Given the large degree of inter-annual variability in agricultural production, though, it is more likely that the silos were intended to take advantage of at least moderately productive years. Thus, their full volumes would reflect a rate of agricultural productivity that was above-average for the site (e.g. Pfälzner 2002). Both of these points necessitate a revision of Danti’s conclusion.

In order to demonstrate the computational error in Danti’s calculations, it is necessary to summarize his model, its variables, and the values he chose to compute those variables, and, finally, to explicitly calculate the results, as such a summary is lacking in his study. Danti’s estimation of the number of people that can be supported by a given amount of grain was calculated based on the assumption that each individual will require 250 kg per year, the balance being made up by other forms of supplementary nutrition, not considered in his calculations (2000: 50). Danti maintained that grain invested in sheep herds in the form of supplementary nutrition will offer, at most, an approximate 80% caloric return in the form of meat and dairy products (2000: 62). He calculated the size of the sheep herd in terms of productive ewes, based on the

assumption that the number of ewes will correlate directly with chaff production, each animal requiring 600 g of chaff each day for a 90-day period of supplemental feeding (2000: 50). To this, an additional 500 g of grain per individual each day for 90 days must be subtracted from the total (ibid). Chaff production is assumed to be equivalent to 300 kg/ha (ibid). 20% of this chaff yield must be subtracted from the initial yield, though, as a result of loss due to trampling (ibid). Furthermore, Danti subtracted 5% of the total grain production as spoilage (ibid) and calculated a seeding rate of 60 kg/ha (ibid), both of which must also be subtracted from the initial yield. Hectarage is calculated on the assumption that production is equal to 400 kg/ha (2000: 50).<sup>146</sup> The weight of grain produced is calculated from its volume, working on the assumption that every 2 m<sup>3</sup> of grain is equivalent to 1 metric ton (2000: 129). The total volume of grain represented by silos II and III is, of course, a simple product of length, width, and height. Calculation is not simple in this case, though, as neither silo is preserved to its full height. Danti estimated a height of 3 m for each silo on the basis of ethnographic parallels (2000: 125-128, 131). Thus, the calculations and variables needed to determine the carrying capacity of Tell Hajji Ibrahim's Phase A2 silos as adopted by Danti are as follows:

(1) The area of each silo is equivalent to 2.56 m<sup>2</sup>, as despite specific differences in length and width between them, both result in an equivalent two-dimensional area. This value is multiplied by estimated height, 3 m, and then added together:

$$(2.56 \text{ m}^2 \times 3 \text{ m}) + (2.56 \text{ m}^2 \times 3 \text{ m}) = 15.36 \text{ m}^3.$$

(2) To determine the mass of grain represented by this volume, the total must be divided by 2 m<sup>3</sup>:  $15.36 \text{ m}^3 \div (2 \text{ m}^3 / 1 \text{ metric ton}) = 7.68 \text{ metric tons}$ , i.e., 7680 kg.

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<sup>146</sup> Given the range of 300-400 kg/ha that Danti cited following Wilkinson (1994), a value of 350 would be more appropriate.

(3) Reductions must be made then for spoilage:  $7680 \text{ kg} - (7680 \text{ kg} \div .05) = 7296 \text{ kg}$ .

(4) It is also necessary to reduce this amount for the succeeding season's seed requirements. Danti assumed that full silos correlate with a yield rate of 400 kg per ha. The total amount of hectarage represented by 7680 kg of raw yield, then, is  $7680 \text{ kg} \div (400 \text{ kg} / 1 \text{ ha}) = 19.2 \text{ ha}$ . 19.2 ha would require  $19.2 \text{ ha} \times 60 \text{ kg/ha} = 1152 \text{ kg}$  of seed.

(5) Thus, after reductions for seeding rate and spoilage, Tell Hajji Ibrahim Phase A2 silos II and III represent  $7296 \text{ kg} - 1152 \text{ kg} = 6144 \text{ kg}$  available for consumption.

(6) It is now necessary to estimate the number of productive ewes that can be supported by this agricultural productivity. This number is derived from the total amount of produced chaff, which must be computed from the total land under cultivation at Danti's assumed rate of 300 kg per ha:  $19.2 \text{ ha} \times (300 \text{ kg} / 1 \text{ ha}) = 5760 \text{ kg}$  of chaff. Factoring out 20% of the product due to trampling, the result is 4608 kg of chaff available for supplemental feeding.

Already, there is a significant departure from Danti's own reported calculations.

Whereas above, the area under cultivation is shown to be 19.2 ha, Danti reports instead 39 ha (2000: 131). Additionally, where the above available chaff is calculated to be 4608 kg, Danti reported instead 9360 kg (2000: 131). The source of this disparity would appear to be Danti's failure to divide the total calculated volume in step 1, above, by  $2 \text{ m}^3$  in step two, converting volume to metric tons.<sup>147</sup> Omitting this step effectively amounts

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<sup>147</sup> Another possibility is that Danti initially calculated the area of both silos together as a single unit, and then erroneously multiplied that product by two.

to a conversion rate of volume to mass of 1 m<sup>3</sup> per metric ton, and yields 38.4 ha of cultivation in step 4, and 9360 kg of available chaff in step 6. Thus, Danti's assertion that the production of Tell Hajji Ibrahim would have supported 127 ewes and 39 to 49 people is simply wrong. It results from a computational error. Instead, the correct values, following from his model, are as follows:

(7) 4608 kg of chaff, assuming a 90-day period of supplemental feeding requiring 600 g per individual per day yields:  $4608 \text{ kg} \div (90 \times 0.6 \text{ kg}) = 85 \frac{1}{3}$  ewes.<sup>148</sup>

(8)  $85 \frac{1}{3}$  ewes would also require:  $85 \frac{1}{3} \times (90 \times 0.5 \text{ kg}) = 3840 \text{ kg}$  of supplemental grain.

(9) Thus, the total grain remaining after seeding and spoilage, 6144 kg, must be reduced by 3840 kg, which yields 2304 kg remaining for human consumption.

Assuming 250 kg per person per year, this represents adequate nutrition for  $2304 \text{ kg} \div 250 \text{ kg per person per year} = 9.216$  persons per year—not 19 as Danti reported (2000: 131).

(10) To this must be added the nutritional return on grain and chaff invested in the flock.  $3840 \text{ kg} \times 80\% = 3072 \text{ kg}$  equivalent nutrition.

(11) With the additional return on pastoral investment, Tell Hajji Ibrahim would yield the equivalent of  $3072 \text{ kg} + 2304 \text{ kg} = 5376 \text{ kg}$ . 5376 kg represents nutrition for  $21 \frac{1}{2}$  people—not 39-49 as Danti erroneously calculated (2000: 131).

Thus, Danti miscalculated and overestimated the productive potential of Tell Hajji Ibrahim. The correct numbers, following his initial assumptions, are  $21 \frac{1}{2}$  persons and  $85 \frac{1}{3}$  ewes, not 39-49 persons and 127 ewes.

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<sup>148</sup> For the sake of precision, all fractions, even of individuals and animals will be retained in these calculations.

It is also possible to calculate for both a minimum and maximum productive potential for silos II and III by adopting other accepted values reported by Danti. In this way, a likely range of productivity can be calculated. Assuming a seeding rate of 100 kg/ha (e.g. Wachholtz 1996: 95; FAO 1999; Wirth 1971: 236) a volume-to-mass conversion of 2.25 m<sup>3</sup> per metric ton (Hole 1991:24; Schwartz 1994b: 27), silos heights of 1.5403 m and 1.606 m (following the lowest width-to-height ratio reported by Danti in his ethnographic survey 2000: 125), a yield rate for grain at 300 kg/ha<sup>149</sup>, and a spoilage rate of 10% (e.g. FAO 1999), total production of silos II and III would sustain nearly 6 1/2 people and 45 ewes.<sup>150</sup> A maximum value of productivity can be calculated according to Danti's model by assuming the most liberal values. A seeding rate of 50 kg/ha, a volume to mass conversion of 1.07 m<sup>3</sup> per metric ton (Reynolds 1974 *apud* Danti 2000: 129), and silo heights of 3.4182 m and 3.564 m (a width to height ratio of 1.62), with a yield rate of 400 kg/ha, and a spoilage rate of 5%, yields production to sustain nearly 48 1/2 people and 185 1/2 ewes. Neither of these extremes are likely to reflect the situation at Tell Hajji Ibrahim in Phase A2, however. Given Danti's assumptions, in the minimal situation, silo heights are likely too low, yielding too little production, while in the maximal situation, seeding rates and mass conversion are both likely too low inflating production. Where, then, is a likely value to lay between a population of 6 1/2 and 48 1/2 people and a flock of between 45 and 185 1/2 ewes?

This question is, though, moot, as an additional problem with these calculations is Danti's assumption that the silos would be filled by a harvest of 'average' productivity. His assumption of a 400 kg/ha production value departs from the FAO's 5-year average

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<sup>149</sup> See above note.

<sup>150</sup> In this scenario, the number of ewes would be limited by the availability of grain instead of chaff.



for Tell Hajji Ibrahim's agricultural zone, reported as 329 kg/ha (FAO 1999). Modern ethnographic accounts of yield rates from non-mechanized, dry-farming pursuits in similar agricultural zones in Syria additionally demonstrate a high degree of variability from year-to-year, as discussed in the previous chapter, from total crop failure to values exceeding 2000 kg/ha (Wachholtz 1996: 6). Although it is difficult to estimate the agricultural suitability and variability experienced by the region around Tell Hajji Ibrahim at the end of the fourth and beginning of the third millennium, it is likely to be comparable to, or slightly better than, present-day conditions. If this is the case, then it is more reasonable to assume that silos II and III from phase A2 were intended to accommodate periodic bumper crops, all the more important because of periodic 'famine' years when there would be little to no return on invested seed. In essence, then, Danti's model needs to be adjusted to reflect the fact that full capacity results not from yields of 400 kg/ha, but at a minimum 800-1000 kg/ha, and possibly higher. Total land under cultivation could then be computed from this assumption, independent of any assumption about the yield of any given year. An average yield rate of 400 kg/ha could then be calculated to determine the average annual volume and mass of the harvest, thereby ascertaining the 'average' carrying capacity of the agropastoral pursuits around Tell Hajji Ibrahim. Observations of modern dry-farming practices tend to identify a bipartite disparity in seeding rates, with sedentarists sowing on the order of 100 kg/ha or more in dry-farming zones (Wachholtz 1996: 95; FAO 1999; Wirth 1971: 236), while non-sedentary populations, sowing fields less likely to be productive, sow approximately 50 kg/ha (Wirth 1971: 236). While it is difficult to ascertain Tell Hajji Ibrahim's precise location relative to ancient isohyets, it will be assumed that the farmstead represents a

‘sedentary’ strategy with reference to Wirth’s observations, above. Thus, a seeding ratio of 100 kg/ha will be adopted. Although ancient reconstructions of grain yields and seeding rates are notoriously difficult to interpret, owing to difficulties of ancient metrology, seed-to-yield ratios are independent of unit conversion and, as such, may be used to query agricultural reconstructions after the fact (see discussion in Reculeau 2011: 121-122). The above estimate of 250 kg per person per year will be adopted. Following the FAO’s estimation, spoilage will be calculated at 7% (1999). Hole’s conversion of volume to mass of 2.25 m<sup>3</sup> per metric ton will be adopted (Hole 1991: 24; Schwartz 1994b: 27). Danti’s estimate of 3 m heights for each silo will also be adopted. Finally, Danti’s pastoral production model will be adopted in full (2000: 49-62). Calculating on the basis of these values, the agropastoral productive potential of Tell Hajji Ibrahim Phase A2, as represented by silos II and III, in a year with a 375 kg/ha yield, is approximately 6 3/4 people and nearly 40 ewes<sup>151</sup>, supported by the cultivation of just over 8.5 ha. If the annual yield is raised to 400 kg/ha, a total of 9 4/5 people could be sustained. Given that some loss of nutrition return from ewes due to disease and predation might be expected, these numbers accord well with the estimate of site occupation that Danti calculated—8—from Naroll 1962 on the basis of roofed area in Phase A2 (*apud* Danti 2000: 114). The results give the impression of a self-sufficient, “small farming village”, where

sheep, goat, cattle, and pig were the main animals exploited, and occasionally a hare or gazelle was hunted. The herds were probably very small, much the same as the modern village of Nefileh, where an individual family owns 10-20 sheep and goat. This is a small enough herd to graze adequately in the agricultural fields...

Weber 1997: 141

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<sup>151</sup> Danti’s model also assumes a very high ratio of ewes to rams that should not simply be taken for granted.

rather than a surplus-producing agricultural center serving “a population composed of both sedentary and seasonally transhumant groups” (Danti 2000: 303).

### *Tell al-Raqa’i*

The same principle—that total storage area is reflective not of years of average production, but rather of some large proportion of ideal production—can be applied also to the Middle Khabur, where large-format storage structures are also encountered during the early part of the EBA. There, excavators reported structures interpreted as large-scale grain storage facilities at five sites, as discussed in the previous chapter. The impression, now widely held, that storage spaces at these sites indicate a significant amount of agricultural surplus, beyond what was required by the populations of these sites, was first argued by the excavators of Tells Atij (Fortin 1990) and al-Raqa’i (Schwartz and Curvers 1992; Schwartz 1994b). Again, this impression is based on the assumption that these storage silos would normally be filled completely with grain—i.e., that a harvest of average agricultural productivity would yield completely full storage facilities—an assumption that I have taken issue with in reference to Tell Hajji Ibrahim, above. The excavators of Tells al-Raqa’i and Atij first explained the purpose of this apparent surplus storage as resulting from the influence of a political power located in a neighboring region, which might have been the ultimate destination of these surpluses, perhaps Mari, referencing the sort of staple finance system proposed by Earle and D’Altroy (1982). This has become known as the ‘export hypothesis’. The same excavators also suggested the possibility that these sites were way-stations along a river route of grain shipment (Curvers and Schwartz 1990: 22; Fortin 1988: 170). Hole has argued, though, that it

would have been energetically costly to ship any agricultural surpluses any great distance from these sites and, furthermore, that it would be unlikely that a settlement of any significant size would be reliant on the productivity of such a marginal region, given to a great degree of inter-annual variation (1999: 276).

The primary criticisms of the export hypothesis, though, challenge the notion of the existence of significant surpluses at all. According to Hole, middle Khabur sites did not possess so much excess storage space that a significant agricultural surplus could be hypothesized (1991: 24). Hole (1991, 1999) and Pfälzner (2002) have both sought to reduce the proposed storage capacities of Tell al-Raqa'i, arguing both that the silos were likely not literally filled to their volumetric capacity, as they would have contained, themselves, secondary containers for holding grain.<sup>152</sup> Pfälzner (2002) has also argued that Tell al-Raqa'i was twice as large in level 3 than what was currently preserved at the time of excavation. As I have maintained in the case of Tell Hajji Ibrahim, above, Hole has maintained that such facilities along the Middle Khabur were likely intended to take advantage of agricultural production of approximately double the average expected agricultural yield (1999: 278). In addition, Hole has also argued that adequate farmland did not exist around Tell al-Raqa'i in large enough quantity to fill the 150 m<sup>3</sup> of volume that Schwartz (1994b) estimated for al-Raqa'i level 4 (1991, 1999). McCorriston, though, has suggested that barley cultivation around Tell al-Raqa'i would indeed have been possible in the steppe beyond the river valley, and thus could account for Schwartz's full volume of grain (1998: 50). Nevertheless, Hole has instead insisted that

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<sup>152</sup> Pfälzner also provided the following ethnographic observation: "In many years of ethnographic fieldwork in West African villages the author rarely saw a storehouse or granary filled completely up to the roof with grain! In any semi-arid region storerooms would be full only in exceptional years with extraordinarily rich harvests" (2002) He does not, however, model the mathematical implications as here.

agricultural surpluses at Middle Khabur sites were moderate, and speculated that they were intended for consumption by local, seasonally present mobile pastoral groups. He inferred support for his mobile pastoral hypothesis from the observation of agricultural and pastoral specialization at these sites during the EBA (e.g. McCorriston 1998; Zeder 1998) and the apparent defensibility of central storage structures at places such as Tells Atij and al-Raqa'i (1999: 277-278).<sup>153</sup> As the most completely published and studied of Middle Khabur sites with reference to specific volumetric measurements, Tell al-Raqa'i will serve as a model by which to establish the relationship between agricultural productivity and population size, in order to determine the presence and magnitude of possible agricultural surpluses.

Schwartz estimated the volume of grain storage in silos from Tell al-Raqa'i level 4 as at least 125 m<sup>3</sup>, and likely about 150 m<sup>3</sup> (1994b: 25). Operating on Hole's estimates that 2.25 m<sup>3</sup> of grain is equivalent to a mass of one metric ton, that 20% of the total stored grain would be lost to spoilage, that 20% of total stored grain would be required for the next season's seed, that each kilogram of grain would yield 3510 kcals (1991), and assuming that each individual would need to derive 1500 kcals per day from this grain, Schwartz calculated that the storage areas of Tell al-Raqa'i level 4 could accommodate 280 people (1994b: 25). Comparing this with Kramer's (1980) estimated site density of 100-200 persons per ha, and an estimated settlement size of 0.3 ha, resulting in approximately 30-60 individuals, Schwartz noted the apparent disparity:

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<sup>153</sup> His hypothesis found its most direct support, though, in the observation of clear evidence for sites of transitory occupation, ostensibly by mobile pastoral populations dating to all periods, including the EBA, in a region surveyed by a Yale University team just west of the Middle Khabur salvage zone. As will be examined below, however, these observations are far from being confirmed. In fact, the nature of EBA settlement, when Hole infers the presence of such groups stands in contradistinction to another survey of the western Khabur region, discussed below (e.g. Lyonnet 1996, 2000), where the presence of such groups seems much more likely.

“These calculations suggest that the storage facilities in Raqa’i level 4 would have sustained a population many times the number of people living on the mound itself” (1994b: 28). While Schwartz’s computations are unassailable, issue can be taken with his underlying assumption, as with Danti, that a year of average production would result in volumetrically filled grain storage spaces. In fact, though, Schwartz’s estimates of grain volume to weight conversion is possibly too high. Also, Hole’s estimates of spoilage, which Schwartz adopted, is excessive compared to other estimates. Both of these would lead to underestimation of total kcals represented by storage at Tell Raqa’i. Finally, the estimation of seed as a proportion of total storage is not as accurate as a calculation following from total cultivated area, if this could be derived. Adopting Schwartz’s estimated silo capacity, and following Danti’s agropastoral model and adopting the same values as for Tell Hajji Ibrahim, above, Tell al-Raqa’i level 4 seems capable, in a year of average production, of supporting 74 individuals and a flock of nearly 463 ewes.<sup>154</sup> This is far less than some of Schwartz’s estimates, though it still exceeds the probable site population of 30-60 individuals. Three significant factors, though, might reduce this total. First, this calculation relies on Schwartz’s volumetric estimate. The level 4 silos were not preserved to original height, and differences in height will have a substantial effect on volume. Second, as has been suggested, if any of this space was given over to storage of goods other than grain, total volume will decrease further (e.g. Hole 1991; Pfälzner 2002). Third, if the settled part of the level 4 site was larger than Schwartz’s estimate, by even a tenth of a hectare, estimated site population would rise to from between 40-80 individuals.

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<sup>154</sup> This assumes, again, a high ratio of ewes to rams.

After accounting for the assumption that grain silos would operate on a ‘filled’ capacity in average years, supplying Danti’s more complete agropastoral model, and correcting his computational error, it seems clear that grain storage facilities at both Tells Hajji Ibrahim and al-Raqa’i were appropriate for their estimated populations, or at the very least that their originally reported surpluses are significantly overestimated. While it is not impossible to rule out some degree of reliable agricultural surpluses, the size and regularity of these surpluses is likely to have been unpredictable, as were shortfall years. These results then counter-indicate the ‘export hypothesis’. At the same time, there appears to be no compelling reason to accept Hole’s proposition of the existence of ‘invisible’ mobile pastoral populations on the steppes surrounding the Middle Khabur during the early part of the EBA. The pattern of storage documented at sites in the ‘zone of uncertainty’ are not excessive, and may be entirely explained by the needs of the local, predominantly sedentary populations. The impression left of Tell al-Raqa’i, then, is not of a fortified center producing surpluses but rather, like Tell Hajji Ibrahim, a self-sufficient agro-pastoral community. Excess silo storage capacity then, well-represented in the ‘zone of uncertainty’, was a common-sense hedge that sought to take full advantage of productive years in a climate of inter-annual variability that also resulted in periodic famine years.

#### **‘Pit-houses’ in the ‘zone of uncertainty’**

The association of crop surpluses in the ‘zone of uncertainty’ during the early EBA with mobile pastoral populations was an example of indirect evidence, inferred on the basis of a predisposition to assume the presence of such groups in the first place. In the

case of Tell Hajji Ibrahim, some aspect of this predisposition may have stemmed from a particular feature found in an early level of nearby Tell es-Sweyhat. This is the so-called 'pit house', excavated on what was then the western edge of the Phase 2 settlement at Tell es-Sweyhat (Zettler 1997c: 14-17; Danti and Zettler 2007: 170). Zettler originally drew a connection between the size and form of this pit house and others attested by earlier ethnographers of the region as being associated with "semi-sedentary or transhumant tribal populations in the Euphrates valley" (1997c: 16):

The resemblance between the structures Daker and D'Hont describe and our excavated pit house is remarkable. The pits were 1–1.5 m deep and the houses, though normally rectangular or sub rectangular, were 4–6 m in length and 3–4 m wide, with longitudinal axis oriented north-south. The earth from digging was piled on the sides around the pit to form the base of the walls and increase the useful height of the building. Frequently, in curing the put, benches for sitting, sleeping, and storing materials were left on all sides... (Daker 1984:58-60).

Olivier D'Hont has noted that at the beginning of this century, when the 'Agedat herded sheep and practiced cereal agriculture in the summer and early fall, if the pastoral potential of production units was reduced by cold, the poorest members of the tribe would be forced to... pasture their reduced herds in the river valley (1994:211). They would frequently live during that time in semi-subterranean dwellings.

Zettler 1997c:16-17

At the same time, the use of such structures was also associated with sedentism and a shift toward agricultural production:

Between WWI and WWII, the 'Agedat began to grow wheat and barley in the fall and winter (in large part because of market forces). Then the majority of tents were relocated to the desert in February, a small number of tribesmen would remain behind in the river valley with a few animals to watch and work the fields. Those who remained commonly occupied semi-subterranean dwellings through the winter ([D'Hont]1994: 212).

Zettler 1997c: 17

Dakar noted a similar role for the 'half-buried hut' in the transition to sedentary agricultural pursuits (1984: 52). Striking though the parallel may be, there is nevertheless



room for caution in drawing such a direct assumption regarding the nature of the occupants of the Tell es-Sweyhat 'pit house'.

Subterranean structures have been quite commonly encountered by ethnographers and, despite similarities in form, are known to be often used by sedentary communities. Gilman, for instance, noted on the basis of observations drawn from Murdock's Ethnographic Atlas, that sedentary cultures account for nearly one-fifth of the instances of subterranean house dwellers (1987: 543, fig. 3). Furthermore, pastoralists by no means have a monopoly on the use of such structures. Gilman noted that some 77% of pit house users attested ethnographically are purely hunter-gatherers (1987: 545). Thus, even if there is a mobile connection with this form of architecture, and a connection to a process of sedentarization, it need not imply a pastoral focus and segmentary lineage systems by extension. Furthermore, one need not even assume a domestic function for such a structure. The thermal efficiency resulting from its form that Gilman remarked upon, making it a particularly attractive habitat during cold seasons (1987: 542), would also make it an ideal storage facility. It is not inconsequential, then, that significant evidence of storage was found in the Tell es-Sweyhat Phase 2 pit house. The significance of these remains, however, is downplayed by the excavators: "Except for the large number of medium-to-large jars fitted for lids, our pit house showed no evidence of having a specialized function and every indication of having been a domestic structure" (Danti and Zettler 2007: 170), though "the jars, which might indicate a specialized storage function, could equally be explained if the occupants had depended on stored comestibles" (ibid). A primary storage function seems strongly indicated both by its associated material remains, and comparison to another roughly contemporary structure

from the Middle Khabur region. A roughly contemporaneous, nearly identical structure, 5 m in diameter, was excavated at Tell Knedig, and assigned to Bauperiode 4, Bauschicht XIII, complex B (Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005: 21)—the EJ 2 period. That structure adjoined a domestic space. Unfortunately, excavation never reached the floor of this round, subterranean annex, and no artifacts have been attributed to it by the excavators. Nevertheless, it is rooted in a sedentary, urban architectural complex and is unlikely to have hosted a semi-mobile element of the site's population. It seems likely that it rather served a storage function. While it is possible that the Tell es-Sweyhat pit house indicates the presence of a seasonally mobile group, or a mobile group in the process of a transition to a more sedentary way of life, ethnographic accounts make it clear that it is by no means certain. Furthermore, a contemporary parallel, in combination with the material recovered from the 'pit house' itself suggests that it was more likely a storage structure. The certainty with which the excavators of Tell es-Sweyhat interpret it as the former is likely due to their erroneous overestimation of the agropastoral productivity of Phase A2 Tell Hajji Ibrahim at the beginning of the EBA.

### **Developing socio-political complexity in the early EBA**

The results discussed above from both Tells Hajji Ibrahim and al-Raqa'i can be placed into a context of a process of developing sociopolitical complexity in the first half of the EBA. In the first quarter of the EBA, most settlements in Syria were small, either being altogether new foundations or reduced from previous LC occupations. Some evidence of early EBA sociopolitical complexity is known from sites that would go on to develop into primary centers of local settlement systems and regional political powers,

such as at Tell Leilan, Tell Chuera, Tell Hariri, and Tell Mardikh. At the same time, a certain degree of sociopolitical complexity is evident at some sites that, nevertheless, lack clear indications of political hierarchy or inequality. Concomitantly, there is an emphasis on broad-based subsistence strategies. By the end of the first half of the EBA, more complex political and economic networks seem to have evolved in most regions. Materially, this was marked by the development of settlement systems dominated by central sites, the construction of walls around sites of both primary and secondary order—continuing a trend initially begun in the first quarter of the EBA—as well as other monumental structures, evidence of increasing technical skills in the production of various crafts including metalworking, a diversification of burial practices as well as increasing evidence of sociopolitical inequality in mortuary contexts, and a shift from broad-based subsistence practices towards increasing specialization on sheep/goat pastoralism and barley agriculture. Absent positive evidence of mobile pastoral populations, it seems most likely that pastoral and agricultural production strategies were structurally and culturally unified in communities represented by sedentary settlements on the EBA Syrian landscape.

Southern, ‘Uruk’ material culture started to disappear just before the beginning of the third millennium, roughly coterminous with the beginning of the Jemdat Nasr period in the southern alluvium.<sup>155</sup> The immediate effects of the Uruk withdrawal are difficult to discern. The earliest levels of most EBA sites are not very well exposed and the continuation of some Uruk stylistic forms after the withdrawal complicates the association of specific stratigraphic levels with this period. The nature of this period in

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<sup>155</sup> After this time, ceramic continuity can be detected in some places. For instance, reserved slip, a tradition that began during the Uruk Expansion, persisted in the western Jezireh and western Syria into the EBA.

the eastern Syrian Jezireh is difficult to apprehend.<sup>156</sup> Better evidence of this period comes from Euphrates salvage excavations in Syria. In the Tabqa zone, where the occupation of Uruk colony sites seems to have come to a sudden end, survey has demonstrated the dispersal of small communities with indigenous material culture in the Tell es-Sweyhat embayment, perhaps contemporary with the very end of occupation of the ‘colony’ sites (Wilkinson 2004: 180). Excavation at Tell Hajji Ibrahim demonstrated that the immediately post-Chalcolithic occupation in that area was characterized by low density and low intensity subsistence agriculture and husbandry. By contrast, continuity of occupation, and perhaps a hierarchical settlement system, is possible at Tell Hadidi, on the left bank opposite the Tell es-Sweyhat embayment. Though Chalcolithic material was recovered in limited exposures during salvage operations, the extent and the nature of its occupation levels at the time of this transition remain virtually unknown (Dornemann 1990). Uruk material is almost unattested in the southern part of the Tishrin embayment, but is much more common nearer to, and beyond the Turkish border, where many sites contain sequences that seem to document a post-Uruk transition. These include Zeytinli Bahce Höyük (Frangipane 2007), Tilbes Höyük, Surtepe (Fuensanta 2007: 143), and Tilbeshar in the Sajur Plain, west of the Carchemish zone, where Kepinski detected small, fortified settlements dating to the immediate post-Uruk phase (2007: 164).<sup>157</sup>

Evidence of discontinuity and political de-integration from the preceding LC period is most pronounced in the Khabur Triangle, where evidence suggests that the EJ 1

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<sup>156</sup> Lebeau has recently stated that, in the Khabur at least, “trying to characterise the Period EJZ 0 is a challenge that cannot currently be undertaken” (2011: 367).

<sup>157</sup> Further north, at Arslantepe on the Upper Turkish Euphrates, the withdrawal of Uruk influence seems to have correlated with a political crisis (Frangipane 2001: 4).

landscape was only sparsely inhabited by village-based settlement systems with weakly integrated settlement hierarchies. Those sites that would be regional political centers in the later EBA were much smaller at this time. Survey around the site of Tell Hamoukar, for instance, showed a sharp reduction in the number of sites from 19 LC to only 4 Ninevite 5 period sites. Aside from Tell Hamoukar, all of those were 1.18 ha or less in size (Ur 2010b: 104). Surface prospection on the site of Tell Hamoukar itself led to the estimation that early Ninevite 5 settlement there was restricted to an area of approximately 8 ha on the high mound (Ur 2010b: 105), representing an approximate 50% contraction from the LC (Ur 2010b: 100).<sup>158</sup> The results of initial surveys around Tell Leilan contradict this trend, with the observation of 21 Leilan Period III sites, an increase from 15 LC sites (Stein and Wattenmaker 1990: 12).<sup>159</sup> A recent reanalysis, though, revised the number of sites contemporary with the EJ 1 period down to only 7 (Ristvet apud Wossink 2009: 96). Analyses of plant remains from this period at Tell Leilan suggest that its citizens pursued a strategy incorporating the cultivation of both wheat and barley in equal proportions (Wetterstrom 2003). At Tell Brak, settlement seems to have been limited to the high mound at this time (Matthews ed. 2003). Meanwhile, the area surrounding Tell Beydar was composed of small, dispersed villages, and although the total occupied area in the zone only decreased slightly from the preceding period, there were nonetheless occupational breaks as 17 ha of new EBA occupation at the site of Tell Beydar itself composed more than one-third of the total

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<sup>158</sup> A large-scale abandonment of an area southwest of Tell al-Hawa is possibly contemporaneous (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 49).

<sup>159</sup> Stein and Wattenmaker also noted the existence of two differentiated settlement systems composed of small rural settlements from 0.5 to 9 ha based around the two small centers of Leilan and Dougird, each about 15 ha at that time (1990: 12-13). This survey, however, made no attempt to subdivide the Leilan III period, which spanned the entirety of the Ninevite 5 period, some four centuries.

settled area there (Ur 2004: 172). Outside the Khabur Triangle, evidence of discontinuity between the LC and EBA also comes from the site of Tell Hammam et-Turkman on the Balikh River. While the site itself yielded a long sequence of fourth and third millennium settlement, including the early EBA, a destruction level characterized the end of the LC occupation and, coupled with the absence of Uruk ceramic forms, this suggests a hiatus of unknown length between these two periods (Van Loon and Meijer 1988: 688).<sup>160</sup>

In and around the Khabur Triangle, evidence of EJ 1 ruralism and settlement autarky was followed, by the end of the EJ 2 period, with the development of settlement hierarchies, clear indications of material and political inequality, and subsistence specialization and regional integration. Survey around nearby Tell al-Hawa, Iraq, at this time, just to the east of the Khabur Triangle, indicated a period of settlement expansion and re-organization. By the end of the Ninevite 5 period there is evidence of a three-tier settlement hierarchy including a number of small villages or farmsteads centered on Tell al-Hawa (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 49-50). Surface survey of Tell Hamoukar indicated the possibility that it had attained a size of 98 ha by the end of the Ninevite 5 period, having increased from as few as 8 ha in the early part of the third millennium, although its hinterland still seems to have remained nearly empty of settlements (Ur 2010b: 104-106). At Tell Leilan, Ristvet noted a considerable increase in site numbers and aggregate size in the Leilan IIIb-c periods and detected the presence of a three-tier site hierarchy (apud Wossink 2009: 96). Her phase 3, which overlaps with EJ 2 and early EJ 3, also witnessed a decline in total settlement numbers and concomitant growth of Tell

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<sup>160</sup> Curvers (1990:28) suggested the possibility that occupation was continuous, nonetheless, but recently Hempelmann, on the basis of his periodization of early pottery phases from Tells Chuera and Kharab Sayyar, has argued that the earliest EBA levels at Tell Hammam et-Turkman contain TCH IA/IB diagnostics, thus confirming an occupational hiatus dating to the beginning of the EBA (2013: 175).

Leilan, possibly indicating a process of nucleation of the regional population at that site that began at the end of the EJ 2 period (apud Wossink 2009: 96). At that time, settlement at Tell Leilan expanded from a size of 15 to 90 ha (Weiss 1990). This final phase of the EJ 2 also bears witness to the construction of a fortification wall on the acropolis and the construction of a large storage structure on the northwest side of the acropolis (Weiss 1990). Meanwhile, an approximately contemporary mud brick grave was found to contain an individual with carnelian beads, shells, a cylinder seal and copper-bronze toggle pins (Schwartz 1983: 37-38), suggesting the interred to be an individual of high status (Ristvet 2005: 98). Analysis of late Ninevite 5 period agricultural practices at Tell Leilan suggest an expansion of agricultural activity to drier lands and an increasing emphasis on barley cultivation at this time (Wetterstrom 2003). Detailed results of a survey of the region of Tell Brak are not yet available (Wright et al. 2006-2007), but at the site itself settlement appears to have expanded off of the high mound near the end of the EJ 2 (Ur et al. 2011: 9). This period at Tell Brak also includes monumental public architecture in the form of terracing operations (Oates and Oates 2001a: 39-40) and, elsewhere, a single-roomed temple (Matthews 2003: 107-113).<sup>161</sup> Evidence from the western edge of the Khabur Triangle is mixed. At Tell Beydar, survey has been unable to define a degree of chronological clarity necessary to comment on this period. The entire early third millennium there, though, without further refinement, has been characterized as one of low settlement intensity, although expanding in settlement numbers and aggregate size in the mid- to late-third millennium (Ur 2004: 174-175).<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> This period appears to correlate with the latter part of Phase J and Phase K at Tell Brak (Quenet 2011: 31).

<sup>162</sup> Although necessary chronological indicators are lacking, it is tempting to understand this expansion as contemporary with the EJ 2 period.

Nevertheless, Tell Beydar itself seems to have witnessed the construction of both its inner and, shorter-lived outer, city walls during the EJ 2 period (Bluard 1997, Quenet 2011: 24). Further west, in and around the Balikh River Valley, it is not possible to distinguish this period from the early EBA, as mentioned above. At the site of Tell Hammam et-Turkman, excavations of this period have uncovered scanty evidence of an apparent domestic context (Meijer 1988: 81).

Further evidence of EJ 1 ruralism comes from the small, self-sufficient agricultural settlements known from salvage excavations carried out along the Khabur River south of Hasseke, which include Tell al-Raqa'i.<sup>163</sup> Architectural remains from the EJ 1 period at these sites are composed of small and simply constructed one or two-room, single-storied domestic structures, with forms that are largely similar between the sites.<sup>164</sup> Estimating the size of occupation at these sites in the EJ 1 is impossible due to the limited nature of exposures, though it is notable that all of these tells were small.<sup>165</sup> Speaking to some degree of sociopolitical complexity in the EJ 1 period, the presence of at least one circumvallation has been detected by excavations in three different areas of Tell Atij. Reconstruction suggests it enclosed an area of approximately 0.25 ha (Fortin and Cooper

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<sup>163</sup> Of the thirteen EBA sites that have been excavated and published in at least a preliminary format, at least seven of these have shown some evidence of EJ 1 occupation. Descriptions of these levels and the establishment of their chronological associations are difficult owing to the fact that they were not widely exposed in any of these sites. This seems to have been largely a result of more extensive EJ 2 and 3 occupations above them. Chronological refinement was also hampered, as some excavators noted, by a relative paucity of cultural material, especially in earlier levels (e.g. Schwartz 2015; Fortin 1998: 234). EJ 1 and or EJ 2 levels are probably also present at Tell Tuneinir (Fuller and Fuller 1997: 144).

<sup>164</sup> Although Fortin has previously interpreted the EJ 1 architecture at Tell Atij explicitly as lacking a domestic character (1998: 234-35), this is only by comparison with later EJ 2 and 3 domestic structures in the area. In fact, they compare favorably with nearby EJ 1 domestic structures.

<sup>165</sup> The tells of Raqa'i and 'Atij both measure approximately a half hectare. Ziyadeh measures approximately 1.2 ha (Buccellati et al. 1991: 35), as does Kerma (cf. Saghie 1991, fig. 1). Melebiya measures approximately 3.2 ha but is now eroded on its river facing side. Lebeau has estimated it to be more than half eroded, which, if true, could yield possibly as much as 7 ha (Lebeau 1993: 29). Bderi has an extent of approximately 5 to 6 ha (Pfälzner 1989-1990: 212).



1994, fig. 19).<sup>166</sup> The excavators of Tell Knedig have suggested the presence of a similar EJ 1 structure at that site, though its absolute extent and orientation are unclear (Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005, Taf. 5).<sup>167</sup> The little evidence relevant to EJ 1 phase subsistence that has been published, relating so far only to Tells Atij and al-Raqa'i, seems to confirm a broad-based subsistence strategy at that time, relative to a later specialization in barley cultivation and sheep/goat herding in the EJ 2 and 3 phases (McCorriston 1998; Zeder 1998, 2003; van Zeist 2015; Rufolo 2015). Thus, in the Lower Khabur basin during the EJ 1 period, the evidence currently gives the impression of small-scale, self-sufficient farming communities of no more than a couple hundred residents, without clear evidence of sociopolitical complexity or material inequality, though possessing some degree of communal labor organization.<sup>168</sup>

Evidence from the Middle Khabur River Valley relating to the EJ 2 period is more robust than the preceding EJ 1, owing primarily to larger excavation exposures.<sup>169</sup> Excavations demonstrate that this region shares evidence of similar developmental trends with the Khabur Triangle at this time. While sites in the region lack clear evidence of political institutions or clear political hierarchy, there is nevertheless a detectable trend towards inequality. Structures devoted to a storage function, perhaps a public one, are

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<sup>166</sup> Although the excavators initially dated the construction of this wall to EJ 2, Quenet has recently revised this in the context of a stratigraphic analysis of the Jezireh for the ARCANE project (2011: 33). While its excavators have argued that this wall provided protection “against pastoral nomads” (Fortin and Cooper 1994: 45, Fortin 1998: 237), the precarious position of the settlement in the floodplain also suggests the possibility that it served to protect the settlement from erosion by floodwaters as well.

<sup>167</sup> In fact, comparison of the EJ 1 structure M 559 (Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005, taf. 5) with the much better attested and articulated EJ 2 enclosure wall M 323 (Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005, taf. 17) is not especially compelling evidence in favor of the excavators’ interpretation of this structure as a settlement enclosure wall.

<sup>168</sup> The nature and significance of the large mud brick platform dating to the EJ 1 at Tell Atij, and identified only by its western edge (Fortin and Cooper 1994), is unclear to me.

<sup>169</sup> Only one new site may be added to this period with certainty. At Tell Gudedā, a deep sounding identified levels that seem contemporary with this period (Fortin 1995: 48-49). According to Quenet, level XI there is contemporary with the EJ 2 (2011: 32).

well-attested in the Middle Khabur at this time, continuing a trend from the EJ 1.<sup>170</sup>

Domestic contexts are much more richly attested in this period and seem to demonstrate a progression of development from one-room structures in the early EJ 2, to two-room or even multi-room structures by the end of the period (Kolinski 1996: 68). Especially significant at this time are results from excavations at Tells Rad Shaqrah, al-Raqa'i, and Knedig which have been sufficiently broad to enable an analysis of the division of space on a settlement-wide level. These settlements all attest to a radial plan with architectural units, probably composed of multiple distinct households, arranged around a settlement core with radiating and sometimes concentric street patterns, giving an impression of having developed organically from a gradual infilling of space (Kolinski 1996: 68; Schwartz and Curvers 1992, fig 8.; and Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005, taf. 26). At Tell al-Raqa'i, the core of the settlement was dominated by a single, thick walled round structure, called the 'Round Building'. This structure was relatively well preserved—especially in the early part of the EJ 2 period—and also thoroughly excavated and published. It seems to have been composed of a number of interior spaces, of which at least five could be interpreted as grain silos (Schwartz 2015a: 34-37). Although nearly nothing at Tell Raqa'i was found in a primary context, most spaces having been apparently cleared before their preservation as archaeological context, a number of sealings were found in level 4, primarily in the Round Building. In the following level, dating to the latter part of the EJ 2 period, the Round Building was only preserved in its northern part, and the continued use of some silos initially constructed in level 4, while possible, could not be confirmed (Schwartz 2015a: 150). A similar structure has not been

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<sup>170</sup> E.g., Kerma (Saghieh 1991), perhaps Atij (Fortin 1989; Fortin and Cooper 1994: 34-36), and Ziyadeh (Hole 1999: 269-270).

encountered at the core of Tell Knedig, where excavation limits did not include the ancient core of the site. Nevertheless, a large architectural compound, ‘Komplex A’, which seem to have been devoted to storage activities, was excavated in the northern part of the settlement (Bastert-Lamprichs et al. in Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005: 18-21). Level 3 at Tell Raka’i also contain the remains of the only clear EJ 2 temple sequence in the region (Schwartz 2015a).<sup>171</sup>

Unfortunately, archaeobotanical and archaeozoological information for most of these sites is either unpublished, published in only rudimentary format, or published in aggregations of levels and phases made on chronological bases that do not correspond exactly with the system and stratigraphic understanding of the sites that has been presented here. In this vein, McCorriston has previously noted very generally the predominance of barley in the EBA levels at Tells al-Raka’i, Atij, and Kerma (1998). More recently, the botanical remains from Tell al-Raka’i have been the subject of a more chronologically detailed study. Van Zeist has noted a distinction there in domesticated plant ratios between the level 5 occupational levels—corresponding to the EJ 1 period—and levels 4 and 3, the latter two being characterized by a proliferation of barley, indicating a specialized agricultural focus (2015: 564).<sup>172</sup> In her analysis of zooarchaeological trends in the Middle Khabur River Valley, Zeder has detected an overall, gradual trend towards sheep/goat production during the EBA (1998: 64). Internal differences, though, are less clear. Between the EJ 1 and EJ 2 levels at Tell al-Raka’i, the ratio of domesticated to wild species increased slightly, especially pig remains. Between

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<sup>171</sup> The function of building 56, the only other architectural unit besides the temple to be arranged on a N-S axis, and to have an extensive foundation, is curious. While its orientation invites consideration as a sanctuary, it was found full to be of ovens and domestic artifacts (Schwartz 2015a: 117-119).

<sup>172</sup> Van Zeist actually goes so far as to describe barley as a ‘cash crop’ at this time.

levels 4 and 3, early and late EJ 2, however, the ratio decreased as gazelle remains expanded. At the same time, sheep/goat and especially cattle expanded to the detriment of pig (1998, fig. 3). More recently, Rufolo has emphasized a shift toward sheep/goat specialization with the beginning of the EJ 2 period at Tell al-Raqa'i, correlating, he argued, with a strategy of subsistence specialization and regional economic interdependence (2015: 608). Analysis of the results from Tell Atij is complicated by the pattern of data aggregation across levels, but nonetheless demonstrates a higher rate of wild taxa at all levels overlapping or corresponding to EJ 2 than has been attested at Tell al-Raqa'i, even in the EJ 1 period (Zeder 1998, fig. 3). The results from Tell Ziyadeh, seemingly dating to the EJ 2, resemble the results from Tell Atij almost exactly, though the preliminary nature of these results obtaining from a small sample size must be emphasized (Zeder 1998, fig. 3).

While the evidence is far from complete, there is strong reason to suspect the growth of material and political inequality as well as increasing identity distinctions during the EJ 2 period in the Middle Khabur. Privatization of domestic spaces is well indicated in architectural blocks at both Tells al-Raqa'i and Knedig. The fact that some domestic units seem to have lacked cooking areas, and shared them in common with others (Schwartz 2015a: 91-92), suggests either that the consolidation of private spaces was an ongoing process during the EJ 2, or that the division of architectural domestic units into domestically cooperative social units was not always absolute. Furthermore, the presence of architectural features interpreted as storage structures associated with private domestic units suggests inter-household wealth inequality at this time. This relationship is especially clear when one compares the western structures of level 3 at

Tell Raqa'i with those of the northeastern sector: the western sector contains more structures clearly devoted to grain storage, are more clearly defined as 2-roomed houses, and contained more high-status artifacts (Schwartz 2015b: 628). In this context, the specialized storage functions of the Round Building at Raqa'i, and Komplex A at Knedig, with their restricted access, could indicate not communal storage, at least by the end of the EJ 2 period, but rather a difference in material wealth between private households and some pre-eminent institution, possibly with a unique political and legal status *vis a vis* the rest of the community, whether that institution was a 'palace', a temple, a 'chieftain', etc. Thus, in the area of the Middle Khabur River Valley during the EJ 2, there is evidence of social and status distinctions having developed from the EJ 1 period.

Despite widespread evidence of ruralism and a lack of clear sociopolitical hierarchies at the beginning of the EBA, there is nonetheless scattered evidence to suggest continuity, in some places, of urban forms and, perhaps, sociopolitical institutions from the preceding LC. Some of the strongest evidence comes from the area of the Wadi Hammar, around Tell Chuera, between the Balikh and Khabur River Valleys. There, seven sites pertaining to the earliest parts of the EBA—including Tell Chuera—have been identified. Survey of these sites indicated the possibility of a three-tier (Hempelmann 2013: 193), but at least a two-tier (Hempelmann 2013: 272) settlement hierarchy around Tell Chuera.<sup>173</sup> Excavations of early EBA contexts at Chuera itself are

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<sup>173</sup> Although later phases of occupation at the site can be more easily tied in to ceramic chronologies from excavated sites in the Khabur, the early EBA ceramic assemblage from Tell Chuera is distinct from these, having more stylistic features in common with sites to the west, along the Euphrates River. Unfortunately, the absolute chronology of those ceramic developments is not yet well understood (see most recently Porter 2007 and Finkbeiner et al eds., 2015), thus it is difficult to relate the early phases of occupation here with developments elsewhere. The excavator of the early levels in field K at Tell Chuera and Tell Kharab Sayyar has published radiocarbon dates suggesting that Tell Chuera Period IA (TCH IA) had its beginning around 3100 BC and terminated at 2850 BC (Hüls in Hempelmann 2013: 157-161), which suggests that the following period IA/IB might belong, at least in part, to the EJ 1 as well. For now, it seems most prudent to

rather limited. On the high mound, excavations have only exposed an 18 m<sup>2</sup> area stretching back to late LC levels (Hempelmann 2013: 32). A wall that would have surrounded most or all of the EJ 0 and 1 levels of the 50 ha central mound, though, has also been indicated by geomagnetic sensing and excavation (Falb 2010: 95-96).

Inferences of sociopolitical complexity in the area of Tell Chuera, if not hierarchy, also stem from the smaller, 5 ha site of Tell Kharab Sayyar. Excavations of EJ 1 contexts at that site have been more extensive, revealing domestic structures and a probable settlement wall, founded on virgin soil, at the beginning of the EBA (Hempelmann 2013: 29). Evidence of sociopolitical complexity at Tell Kharab Sayyar stems from the following facts. First, it was founded on what appears to have been a surface specially leveled and prepared for construction of the settlement. Second, it was apparently planned, being divided into discrete neighborhoods with borders defined by mud brick walls. Hempelmann argued, on the basis of these observations, for the existence of a hierarchical social order in the area at this time (2013: 272). At the same time, though, he noted features which indicate a certain amount of sociopolitical simplicity and self-sufficiency. All of these houses contained evidence for independent textile and metal production, though no evidence for long-term grain storage. Meat production was focused primarily on the household, through the raising of pigs and specialized gazelle hunting. Sheep/goat were also detected, though, and, from their age-at-death profile, seemingly exploited primarily for dairying. Hempelmann detected no social differences between households, and suggested that the spatial organization of both Tells Chuera and Kharab Sayyar reflects the existence of segmental societies with egalitarian ideologies

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adopt the ARCANE interpretation that Tell Chuera phase IA (TCH IA) should be understood to be equivalent with the EJZ 0 and 1 phases, together (e.g. Quenet 2011: 23), while it is acknowledged that the boundaries between these periods are unlikely to overlap perfectly.

(2013: 272-273). Thus, Hempelmann argued, Tell Chuera was already the center of a city-state at the beginning of the EBA, though at the same time characterized by a great deal of egalitarianism and economic self-sufficiency (Hempelmann 2013: 273). This reconstruction, though, must be understood to be somewhat preliminary. Only a small part of Kharab Sayyar has been excavated and the transference of results from the 5 ha Tell Kharab Sayyar onto the 50 ha EJ 0 and 1 occupation at Tell Chuera, with approximately 18 m<sup>2</sup> of exposed excavations from these periods, is somewhat speculative. A great deal of inequality could be lurking there, as well as explicit evidence for larger, hierarchical public institutions. Nevertheless, these excavations have demonstrated the likely existence of a large settlement at Tell Chuera and the contemporaneous occupation at this time of at least five other settlements in the surrounding area, with the possibility of the continuation of distinct sociopolitical institutions from the LC into the EJ 1 period. At this time, Kharab Sayyar at least seems still to have been characterized by a broad subsistence base and an apparently significant degree of material equality despite its ostensible role as a secondary center in a regional settlement system.

In the following period at Tell Chuera, correlating in part perhaps with the EJ 1 but also the EJ 2 period, excavations have demonstrated a continuity of domestic settlement along with the construction of a few structures of possible cultic significance (Meyer 2010a: 51). Excavations around the course of the outer city have, in at least one place, showed its foundation to date back to the late IB or early IC period (Meyer 2010a: 175), thus near the end of the EJ 2 period (Quenet 2011: 22). The excavators noted that this construction seems to have followed the settlement of the lower town area and the

subsequent abandonment of defensive purposes for the upper city wall. Thus, Tell Chuera obtained a characteristic *kranzhügel* shape at the end of the EJ 2 period, which resulted, indirectly, from an expansion of settlement out and away from the main tell and the construction of a new city wall (Meyer 2010a: 181). At nearby Kharab Sayyar, an apparent hiatus in occupation, which marked the beginning of the EJ 2 period there, is succeeded by domestic contexts bordering the inside of a refurbished city wall (Hempelmann 2013: 30-31). Meanwhile, occupation of the five nearby settlements attested in EJ 0 and 1 seems to have ceased by at least the early part of EJ 2, with the possible exception of Dahlis (Hempelmann 2013: 190). This perhaps explains the rapid growth of Tell Chuera at that time, similar to the pattern of settlement growth and reorganization at Tell Leilan, which apparently grew by absorbing some of the population of its catchment zone. Economically speaking, the expansion of sheep and goat pastoralism at Kharab Sayyar at this time seems to indicate both the presence of dairying and the contribution of animals for meat to Tell Chuera (Hempelmann 2013: 274), thus indicating the close correlation of both pastoral activities and sedentary settlement there. This period also witnessed the intensification and expansion of other handicrafts, with cylinder seals and sealings attesting to economic activities ostensibly independent of a central institution, and some indications of long-distance trade (Hempelmann 2013: 274).

It is difficult to compare the precise chronological relationship of developments in and around the Khabur Triangle with those taking place in the Euphrates River Valley because of a regionalization of material cultures at this time, and the lack of robust radiocarbon datasets (see Deckers et al. 2015). Furthermore, even within that zone, there is only a very low degree of chronological resolution. This arises for three reasons. First,



the entire ceramic assemblage of Euphrates River Valley sites in the EBA is characterized by a high degree of homogeneity—few diagnostic wares exist and discriminations between phases must be made on the basis of a review of proportions of wares within and between entire corpora (Porter 2007c: 3). Second, the earliest EBA levels have not been exposed in very large quantities in these sites, resulting in small sample sizes in most cases. Third, even where they have been exposed, most of these sites remain under-published, and so comparison of ceramic remains and other materials are not easily accessible for the construction of a regional chronology.<sup>174</sup> As a result of this ambiguity, Porter treated the first two phases of her Euphrates Valley pottery typology, corresponding to a period from the end of the LC through to approximately the end of the first half of the EBA (roughly the end of the EJ 2 period, perhaps a bit later), as entirely homogenous with respect to indigenous ceramic forms and wares, distinguishing between the two only on the basis of the presence or absence of continuing LC (both Uruk and indigenous) ceramic forms (2007: 9). Thus, Porter's phase 1 is equivalent, by definition, with the EJ 0.<sup>175</sup> The correlation of Porter's phase 2 with the EJ periodization is not clear. With only slight modification, Porter's proposed six-period division is identical to that adopted by the ARCANE project for the EME system, so that her Phase 1 and 2 are, by definition, equivalent to EME 1 and 2, respectively (Sconzo 2015: 87-88, fig. 1). On the basis of radiocarbon dates derived from EME contexts, a Bayesian estimate of calendar dates corresponding to EME periods, compared to a similarly-derived set of calendar dates pertaining to the Khabur Triangle, one could suggest that the

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<sup>174</sup> For instance, the recently published Middle Euphrates ARCANE volume was able to marshal information for its database from only 14 of 43 third millennium sites stretching from Terqa in the south up to the Karababa Basin in Turkey (Finkbeiner and Novák 2015: 13).

<sup>175</sup> This assumes, of course, that the disappearance of Uruk ceramic forms and influences in both the western and the eastern ends of the Jezireh was broadly synchronous.

end of the EME 2 and EJ 1 periods are approximately equivalent. Many potential sources of error, though, would serve to undermine such a simple equation. For the present purposes, it is enough to demonstrate that a similar progression of development of sociopolitical complexity and specialization characterizes the Euphrates Valley Region of Syria, from Carchemish to Tell Bi'a, as that which characterizes regions further east, even if these timelines cannot be precisely related. The complicated relationship between the EJ and EME systems of periodization is represented in table 5.1.

Throughout the Tabqa region of the Euphrates River Valley, there is a significant break in settlement location between LC sites dominated by Uruk materials, such as Habuba Kabira, Jebel Aruda, and Tell Sheikh Hassan, and early EBA sites. The earliest EBA remains in the area of Tell es-Sweyhat are known from the small site of Tell Hajji Ibrahim, where excavations uncovered a single-roomed house with a courtyard, work areas, and, in phase A2, as discussed above, two contemporaneous silo structures (Danti 2000: 105-113).<sup>176</sup> These phases of Tell Hajji Ibrahim can be confidently dated to the EME 1 period on the basis of radiocarbon dates and Uruk materials in the lowest level there. The date of the earliest periods of activity at Tell es-Sweyhat is much more difficult to establish. Holland assigned Period J at Tell es-Sweyhat to the first century and a half of the EBA (2006: 380), however this period is represented only by storage pits with indigenous, EBA ceramic characteristics typical of much of the EBA assemblage and lacking any Uruk forms. Thus, it cannot be equated with Porter's phase 1 *stricto sensu*, though it may indeed date back to this period. The earliest occupational levels at Tell es-Sweyhat seem to date to the beginning of the EBA, but it is difficult to

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<sup>176</sup> The excavators' opinion that the small mounds SS 2 and SS 9 might have a similar nature as Tell Hajji Ibrahim is based purely on formal comparison of the mounds and their locations next to wadis (Danti 2000: 150). Nevertheless, this does not seem a particularly speculative assumption.

assign them to any specific portion of the EME 2 period (Holland 2006: 12). Early levels there are probably best represented by excavations on the high mound, where scattered architectural remains, possibly attributable to domestic contexts, were encountered (Holland 2006: 381). The date of the pit house located on the western edge of the high mound, discussed above (Armstrong and Zettler 1997c: 13-16), is very difficult to ascertain, attributable to either the late EME 2 or early EME 3 (thus probably contemporary with either late EJ 1 or EJ 2).<sup>177</sup> Settlement at Tell es-Sweyhat during Zettler's phase 2 seems to have been limited to the 5-6 ha area of the high mound (Zettler 1997b: 169).<sup>178</sup> Thus, in the embayment as a whole, possibly as many as six sites were occupied simultaneously in the early EBA, all under 1 ha in size, with the exception of the centrally located Tell es-Sweyhat. Data relating to the subsistence economy of the area at this time is not particularly robust, although as mentioned above, early contexts at Tell Hajji Ibrahim showed evidence of a reliance on sheep/goat, cattle, and pig with very little evidence of any hunted species, "paint[ing] a picture of a small farming village," (Weber 1997: 141).<sup>179</sup> Botanical remains are also commensurate with such an interpretation (Miller 1997a: 103-104). Thus, there is good evidence of low site density

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<sup>177</sup> Tell es-Sweyhat is vexed by no less than three systems of periodization, none of which are inherently correlated. Early EBA levels at Tell es-Sweyhat correspond in very general terms to Holland's periods J and H and Zettler's Phases 1 and 2. Estimates of the relationship between Holland and Zettler's periodization, and their absolute chronology, vary. Wilkinson, for instance, assigned Zettler's period 2 to Porter's Phase 3, and thus EME 3, and the middle part of Holland's Period G (2004: 86). Holland, however, equated Zettler's phases 1 and 2 with his periods J and H, respectively (2006: 18). Finkbeiner equated J and possibly H with EME 2 and equated Zettler's phase 1 exactly with EME 2 (2015: 40, pl. 2), thus following Holland. A calibrated radiocarbon sample from the phase 1 levels into which the pit house was dug does not serve to clarify matters much, suggesting only that these strata dated to between 2900 and 2500 BC (Danti and Zettler 2007: 169), thus post-dating EME 1 but, theoretically, though unlikely, extending into the EME 4.

<sup>178</sup> Wilkinson suggested instead an area as low as 2 ha, citing Zettler's estimation of the upper mound as an upper limit on size at this time. However, Wilkinson reported that area as being "in the range of up to 11-13 ha" (2004: 136 n. 67).

<sup>179</sup> Though, of course, being composed of seemingly only a single household, *farmstead* might be a more appropriate word.

and an agro-pastoral subsistence economy focused on household production in this area during the first quarter, and possibly the entire first half, of the EBA.

In contrast to the impression left by Tell Hajji Ibrahim in the early part of the EBA, evidence for possible LC continuity and urbanism comes from the site of Tell Hadidi, just across the valley. Unfortunately, little evidence relevant to the role of mobile pastoralism in the maintenance of that urbanism is available. According to its excavator, early EBA levels at Tell Hadidi, corresponding primarily to strata I and II<sup>180</sup>, demonstrated that this site was occupied over its entire 54 ha extent throughout the EBA (Dornemann 1985: 50). Unfortunately, these strata were heavily disturbed by later building activities and excavations were not very extensive in any area, though they were widely placed across the mound. The EME 2 period may be missing altogether in the area RII sounding (Porter 2007c: 9, 11). Thus, very little can be said about the structure of the community in residence there. Unfortunately, of the zooarchaeological work that has been undertaken, only preliminary results have been offered, and these do not treat the EBA specifically.<sup>181</sup> If it can be maintained, the establishment of the size of this site in the EME 1 period indicates the likely presence of a substantial degree of socio-political complexity in this part of the Euphrates River Valley from the beginning of the EBA.

Other early EBA sites in the Euphrates River Valley give mixed impressions of small scales, without clear inequality, but nonetheless with evidence of technological sophistication and sociopolitical complexity without clear evidence of continuity from the LC period. Evidence relevant to the question of independent mobile pastoralism is not forthcoming from these sites. One of these is the 1.4 ha site of Tell Halawa B, where the

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<sup>180</sup> Finkbeiner has assigned these stratum to EME 1 and “EME 2–EME 4?”, respectively (2015: 36).

<sup>181</sup> Buitenhuis did note, though, a greater significance of cattle to small ruminants for the Bronze Age as a whole (1979: 168).

latter part of the first quarter of the third millennium is likely represented (Orthmann 1989: 8), at least in its lower levels. There, four phases of an early EBA settlement atop virgin soil were excavated (Lüth 1989: 85). On the basis of ceramic parallels, Finkbeiner claimed that phase 3, the earliest exposed phases for which detailed architectural and stratigraphic information has been ascertained, should be correlated to the early EME 2 period (2015: 36). It contained evidence of a terracing of the upper part of the mound, along with a settlement wall serving either a retaining or defensive purpose (Lüth 1989: 87-88). One building complex there contained evidence of industrial activities, including metal working (Lüth 1989: 90-91). In the later phase 2, datable to the late EME 2 period (Finkbeiner 2015: 36), this complex was replaced by what may be termed a cultic compound, with at least two sanctuaries associated with a temenos wall that served as a boundary between that space and industrial areas south of it (Lüth 1989: 97). Following phase 2 at Tell Halawa B, phase 1 (early EME 3) witnessed some reconfigurations of this cultic compound, including the removal of the western room, and continued use of the temple (Lüth 1989: 97-101). Sealings on potsherds belonging to this phase attest to some level of bureaucratic control of goods (Lüth 1989: 108). Analysis of faunal material recovered from Tell B indicated the economic importance of sheep/goat even at this early time, though cattle still made up roughly one-third of identified faunal remains (Boessneck and von den Driesch 1989: 116-117). Although this analysis suggested also an increasing predominance of sheep by the end of the third millennium at Tell A (i.e. 1989: 117, 145, and dia. 1), the paucity of remains from later periods of the EBA precludes a statistically significant comparison of different periods (1989: 114). At Tell al-‘Abd, where occupational levels datable to the EME 1 period might well exist, a city

wall and palatial building were encountered, their foundations dating between the EME 2 and EME 4 periods (Finkbeiner 1997: 100, 2015: 35), though more probably these contexts relate to the very late EME 2 period at the earliest.

Periodization continues to be difficult in the embayment south of Carchemish, where early EBA levels<sup>182</sup> have been identified at five sites.<sup>183</sup> However, on the basis of radiocarbon dates, only Tell Shiyukh Fouqani can be identified with certainty to EME 1. Area D, levels C-A<sup>184</sup> at Tell Shiyukh Fouqani, by all accounts a sedentary agricultural center at this time (Morandi Bonacossi 2005: 136-137; Vila 2005), were characterized by both simple domestic architecture as well as some sort of centralized architectural complex (Morandi Bonacossi 2005: 137-138).<sup>185</sup> The latest preserved phases at this site, though, could extend to the latter part of EME 2 (Bachelot et al. 2002: 5, Morandi Bonacossi 2005: 127-128). Despite chronological difficulties, a clear trend towards developing structures of political hierarchy can be detected there in the early part of the EBA. The earliest EBA occupational period at Tell Jerablus Tahtani is composed of an unfortified settlement and seems to date to the EME 1 period, as its excavator describes pottery from these levels as “in general terms... belong[ing] to Jamieson's Horizon 1B” (Peltenburg 1999: 100; see Porter 2007c: 13), though most material pertaining to this phase of occupation has yet to be published in detail. The 6 ha site of Tell Shiyukh

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<sup>182</sup> I.e., levels corresponding to the EBA I and II periods, in the estimation of their excavators.

<sup>183</sup> Tell Shiyukh Fouqani, Jerablus Tahtani, Tell Shiyukh Tahtani, Tell Ahmar, Qara Quzaq. One early EBA site, Tell Khamis, belongs to neither this nor the Tell Banat embayment, being located on the left bank of the river in the gorge midway between the two embayments. Its EBA levels have only been published in a very cursory format (Matilla Séquer 1999).

<sup>184</sup> The only published C-14 dates from this region at this time, from Area D at Tell Shiyukh Fouqani, are equivocal on the EBA chronology of the LC ceramic legacy. There, 5 different samples provide a chronological interval from 3380-3090 BC to 2890-2620 BC. Thus, the final dates for occupation of level A—where a not insignificant number of beveled rim bowls were found (though far fewer than in level C (Morandi Bonacossi 2005: 115))—falls across a wide range of time, from the very beginning of the EBA to the end of the EME 2.

<sup>185</sup> This is also the only site in the Euphrates Valley north of the Big Bend region where occupational continuity from the LC through the early EBA has been demonstrated.

Tahtani contains evidence of occupation throughout most of the EBA. The earliest period of occupation there spans the EME 1 and 2 transition and includes domestic buildings, but also a large mud brick building, with rooms arranged around a buttressed wall (Missione Eufrat, n.d.). Excavations at the 2 ha settlement of Tell Ahmar have encountered only more modest one- to two-room domestic structures dating to either the EME 1, 2, or both periods (Roobaert and Bunnens 1999: 164). At the 1.75 ha settlement of Qara Quzaq, located at the southern limit of the Carchemish zone, evidence of a cultic complex including a temple and multiple funerary structures dating to the EME 2 have been excavated (Olávarri Goicoechea and Valdés Pereiro 2001: 36). The tomb L.12 (E and W) included the remains of two individuals, richly provisioned, with evidence of a funerary meal and partial cremation that resembles the slightly later royal tombs at Ur (Olávarri Goicoechea and Valdés Pereiro 2001: 22-23). Near this tomb, a small room has provided evidence of economic control in the form of more than fifty clay sealings, mostly from cylinder seals, “displaying at least 8 different designs” (Valdés Pereiro 1999: 121). The temple there is reminiscent of that of Halawa Tell B, levels 2 and 1, not only architecturally in its north-south alignment, in contrast to surrounding architecture, and having its foundation on a mud brick platform, but also in its architectural evolution: near the end of the EME 2 period, a complex of rooms was added to the western side of the temple (Olávarri Goicoechea and Valdés Pereiro 2001: 24). Thus, in the valley south of Carchemish, there is good indication of rather small sites with evidence of developing sociopolitical hierarchy by at least the end of the EME 2 period, if not sooner.

Just 5 km south of Qara Quzaq, in the very narrow stretches of the valley, best described as a gorge, between that site and Tell Kosak Shamali, the small site of Tell

Khamis bears domestic occupation levels encountered in a small sounding that seems assignable to the EME 2 period (Matilla Séiquer 1999: 219-220). Otherwise, the next EME 2 ‘context’ encountered comes in the form of the theoretical Phase V at Tell Banat. To this has been assigned the so-called “White Monument III,” presumably a tumulus covered in gravel and a white, *terre pisé* coating underlying the period IV (EME 3) Building 7 (Porter 2000: 315-317), though other evidence bearing on the date of its construction is lacking. Evidence of sociopolitical complexity at that time, without corresponding domestic architecture, has inspired Porter’s interpretation of the mobile origins of Tell Banat’s original population, a point which will be examined below.

Downstream from the Tabqa zone, at Tell Bi’a, near the confluence of the Euphrates and Balikh Rivers, excavations beneath the mausolea of mid-third millennium (EME 3) date and a deep sounding have exposed levels which very likely correspond to the EME 2 period. Below the mausolea these remains take the form a set of public-natured buildings of unknown function, oriented along an east-west street (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000: 6-8), while in the latter area only domestic contexts have been encountered (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000: 71).

Recently, an area of the Euphrates River Valley far downstream of the Tabqa zone, just north of the Jebel Bishri, as well as the western flanks of the mountain, have been the subjects of thorough survey (e.g. Ohnuma and Al-Maqdissi 2008; Lönnqvist, ed. 2008). These extend the impression of self sufficient agro-pastoral settlements with broad subsistence focus down the Euphrates River Valley beyond the zone of uncertainty. Excavation at the modestly-sized 12 ha site of Tell Ghanem al-Ali<sup>186</sup> has exposed EBA phases of occupation that radiocarbon dates establish to have stretched the entirety of the

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<sup>186</sup> Kohlmeyer's site 13, called Tall Ram al-‘Ali in his 1984 article.



third millennium, BC (Hasegawa and Ohnuma 2014; Hasegawa 2010; Nakamura 2010: 127), though the area of exposed early EBA remains is not expansive.<sup>187</sup> Excavators have stated that none of the architecture encountered at the site suggests that it was deliberately planned (Hasegawa and Ohnuma 2014: 134). Evidence of LC discontinuity here resulted from survey on the western flanks of the Jebel Bishri, away from the river valley, which identified a hiatus of cemetery, domestic, or other human activities there, suggesting that following the LC, EBA land use was confined to the more humid lowlands and plateaus of the Euphrates River Valley (Fuji and Adachi 2010: 74). These results are consistent with the hypothesis of a small, self-sufficient agricultural settlement here in the early EBA.<sup>188</sup>

Excavations in the 1970s at the 8 ha site of Terqa demonstrated a high degree of sociopolitical complexity via the existence of a large, multifaceted defensive system, which was rebuilt and modified throughout the third millennium (Buccellati 1979: 43). This defensive system enclosed over 24 ha of total area, with walls spanning 60 feet in width and standing 20 feet high in its ultimate EBA extension (Buccellati 1979: 42). Ceramic indications and a single radiocarbon date suggest that the earliest iteration of this wall was constructed at the very beginning of the EBA (Kelly-Buccellati 1979: 72, Buccellati 1979: 75). This defensive system was modified five times in the EBA. The excavators have hypothesized that the first two modifications took place within one and two centuries following the initial construction (Buccellati 1979: 76-80). If the initial date were confirmed, as well as these intervals, this would put the completion of the

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<sup>187</sup> The second architectural phase there, composed of levels 5 and 6, is roughly contemporaneous to the EJ 2 period (Hasegawa and Ohnuma 2014: 128; Kume and Sultan 2014, fig. 2). This period, unfortunately, is poorly preserved in its relatively limited exposure (Hasegawa and Ohnuma 2014: 126-128).

<sup>188</sup> Unfortunately, the faunal assemblage of the site is presently restricted to the latter half of the EBA (Hongo et al. 2010: 101).

major part of the wall contemporary with a time approximately in the middle of the EME 2.<sup>189</sup> Excavations carried out at the top of the mound in the last two decades have also exposed early EBA levels (e.g. Rouault and Mora 2009), which seem to suggest a slightly later date for the initial construction of the city wall. Though poorly preserved, radiocarbon dates from these excavations suggest that the earliest phase discovered there so far, sitting on virgin soil, is contemporary with the EME 3 period (Finkbeiner 2015: 27), though possibly dating as early as the beginning of the twenty-ninth century (Rouault 2014: 248-249, 259-260), thus mid-EME 2. Thus, the construction of the wall, and at least its first major reconstruction could be attributable to the EME 2 period. In any event, there is evidence for monumental defensive architecture at Terqa in the lower Euphrates in the early EBA, whether that is to be dated to the EME 2 or 3 period, but with no evidence of LC continuity at that site. Phase V at Terqa has been assigned to the latter half of the EME 2 (Finkbeiner 2015: 30, pl. 1). This corresponds to a few burials, including one with an equid, which brings to the mind of its excavators slightly later practices at Umm el-Marra (Rouault and Mora 2009: 659). The earliest levels of phase IV, datable to the EME 3 period (Finkbeiner 2015: 30, pl. 1) are not very clearly preserved (Rouault 2014: 249), but seem to be characterized by domestic spaces with evidence of craft production, including bronze metallurgy (Rouault and Mora 2009: 659). Although this has led its excavators to suggest the possibility of an urban institution involved in this production and trade at this time, there is no architectural evidence for such an institution (Rouault and Mora 2009: 659). Also around this time at Terqa, the city wall seems to have been expanded for the third time (Buccellati 1979: 80-82).

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<sup>189</sup> Unfortunately, the ARCANÉ Middle Euphrates volume makes no mention of these early levels.

Perhaps most famously, the EBA city of Mari, 120 km south of Deir ez-Zor, at Tell Hariri, has also not yielded any evidence of preceding LC occupation, despite the apparent size and scope of its EBA remains, and the level of sociopolitical and technological sophistication demonstrated by these remains. As preserved, Tell Hariri measures some 60 ha.<sup>190</sup> Excavations on the preserved mound have not yet uncovered very extensive areas of early EBA remains, but have encountered numerous successive levels of what has been termed Ville I, the initial phase of occupation at the site, the remains of which are found throughout the preserved mound (Margueron 2004 fig. 43 and Muller 2014 fig. 2). Results from radiocarbon and thermoluminescence dating techniques seem to establish that at least the first half of Ville I is contemporary to the EJ 1 and EME 2 periods (cf. Margueron 2004: 9, 557). Mari seems to stand apart from other fertile crescent cities of the EBA in that it has an urban character at the very beginning of the EBA, without any evidence of preceding fourth millennium occupation anywhere on the site. In addition to its large size already at this time, there is evidence for monumental public works in the form of a city wall, a possible administrative building, the ‘bâtiment aux Fondations de pierres’, (Margueron 2004: 90), and another monumental building beneath the later Nini-zaza temple (Margueron 2004: 96), which speak to a high degree of sociopolitical complexity, as well as some particularly rich burials<sup>191</sup>, which indicate a high probability of material inequality and economic and political competition. Evidence that might support a picture of mechanical solidarity in

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<sup>190</sup> Though its excavator believes it would once have taken the form of a completely circular settlement, measuring some 190 ha in total (Margueron 2004: 65), this suggestion is becoming increasingly doubted (e.g. Schwartz 2011: 680).

<sup>191</sup> Most rich tombs from Ville I date to the latter part of that phase, a time most likely contemporary with the EJ 2. One early exception, however, seems to be tomb VII W 50 NE T-2, from phase 2 in chanter L with numerous ceramic finds and two cylinder seals.

the urban center of Mari during the early part of the Ville I period is the widespread presence of metallurgical installations integrated into structures commonly interpreted as domiciles (Muller 2014: 44). The ubiquitous nature of this metal working trade suggests a relatively low degree of economic integration between households, which were ostensibly engaged in some networks of long-distance trade involving metals, amongst other goods (Margueron 2004: 121-122). At the same time, early monumental public projects mentioned above, along with the presence of communal ovens in chantier L (Muller 2014: 73), would seem to reflect a situation similar to that found in the Middle Khabur salvage sites, where public works, especially storage areas, have been identified, though on a significantly larger scale.

At Mari, it is clear that the later phases of Ville I persisted into a period contemporary with the EJ 2 and EME 3, though how far is unclear. As mentioned above, dates derived from radiocarbon and thermoluminescence techniques have assigned the latest encountered phases of Ville I to approximately 2700 BC (Margueron 2004: 557). Nevertheless, it is clear in some places that the latest actual phases of Ville I were destroyed in antiquity, possibly as a result of terracing activities related to the construction of Ville II (Margueron 2004: 101), right about at the beginning of the EJ 3, later EME 3 period. This raises the question of how much of Ville I was destroyed, and whether or not this could account for the gap in time observed between the oldest preserved levels of Ville I and the foundation of Ville II. On the basis of dates derived from radiocarbon and thermoluminescence, this would appear to represent an approximate one and a half century time span. The site's excavator, Jean-Claude Margueron, favors the interpretation that some reduction in site size, or perhaps

widespread abandonment (2004: 101), characterized at least the latter part of the Ville I occupation, and thus Mari would stand in some contrast to the clear growth in site sizes noted in the Khabur basin to the north and elsewhere. Nevertheless, remains from Ville I contemporary to at least the early part of the EJ 2 and EME 3 are preserved in the form of domiciles with artisanal characteristics and some particularly rich tombs. Among those, five stone-built corbelled tombs have been excavated to date, three of them beneath the later Ishtar temple (Margueron 2004: 94), speaking to growing sociopolitical inequalities during the Ville I period. Unfortunately, the layers from which these tombs were dug are among those that were destroyed during the foundation of Ville II.

West of the Euphrates, in the Jabbul Plain, the earliest levels at Umm el-Marra derive from deep soundings to virgin soil in the acropolis and are characterized by small-scale domestic architecture contemporary with the EJ 2 and EME 3 (and possibly late EJ 1 and EME 2) (Schwartz et al. 2003: 327-329). Further west, at the 60 ha site of Tell Mardikh, the location of ancient Ebla, the earliest stratigraphic layers encountered thus far date to the first half of the EBA, but are not very widely encountered. They consist of two buildings on the acropolis that precede Palace G—G2 and CC—and which can be assigned to the earliest part of the Ebla IIA phase, dating either to a period contemporary with the EJ 1 or the early part of the EJ 2, and thus EME 2, periods (Matthiae 1987: 138, 2000: 572-575; Mazzoni 1991: 173). Both of these structures, as far as they have been excavated, seem to have a storage character and at least suggest the existence of some larger institution.

There are significant lacunae in the archaeological record, where early EBA levels are either suspected, or are known to exist, but either cannot be securely identified or

have not been widely exposed by excavation and, therefore, are of unknown significance. This is especially the case for regional surveys, which are often unable to achieve the sort of chronological control necessary to discriminate between the early periods of the EBA. Surveys of the Balikh have little light to cast on the early EBA. Guided by excavations of ceramic sequences at Tell Hammam et-Turkman, a survey of the Balikh River Valley in Syria divided materials into an early and later period (Curvers 1990: 181). 26 early EBA sites were identified by survey, though none can be reliably placed into finer chronological resolution (Curvers 1990: 194). In a survey east of Tell Bi'a, between it and Halabiya/Zalabiya—a narrowing of the valley whence it turns more strongly southwesterly—Kay Kohlmeyer noted 9 other EBA sites<sup>192</sup>, without more precise chronological classification (1984: 110-112). The lower stretch of the Euphrates River Valley in Syria, between Deir ez-Zor, some 20 km downstream from Halabiya/Zalabiya, and the Iraqi frontier at Abu Kemal has also been subject to recent survey. In that stretch, which contains two of the most important EBA centers—Tell Hariri, ancient Mari, and Tell Ashara, ancient Terqa—surveyors identified 11 additional EBA sites (Geyer and Monchambert 2003: 251 and fig. 8). They were certain, however, that this number underestimates the ancient situation, as most of the sites identified were located outside of the floodplain, either on relict parts of the valley floor or on the edge of quaternary terraces just above, implying that other sites have been eroded or silted over (2003: 251). None of these sites could be assigned more specifically to any particular part of the EBA on the basis of survey alone. West of the Euphrates River Valley, there are various

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<sup>192</sup> By name these are: Tall Aswad, Tall aš-Šaiḥ As'ad, a site near the village of Faṭīsat Di'b, Ma'din al-'Atiq, Tall Ram al-'Ali, Tall Mugla as-Sagīr, a site west of Ġazirat aš-Šaṭī', Tall Ṭadayain, and another site without name, located 12 km west of Raqqa in the valley of a wadi on the right bank of the Euphrates River.

surveys that could be mentioned that lack fine enough chronological resolution to discuss changes over the course of the first half of the EBA. It can at least be said, though, that these surveys all indicate a relative paucity of early EBA remains, whether these relate to more arid regions of inner Syria, or the relatively more humid zones closer to the Mediterranean. In the Jabbul Plain, for instance, which lies near the southern limit of the area of rainfall agriculture, within the 'zone of uncertainty', there is a clear increase in site density from 13 identified sites with LC remains to 63 sites with at least one EBA sherd (Yukich 2013: 191-192), although only twenty-seven can be placed somewhere within the EB I-III (2013: 193). The most significant excavated EBA site in the plain, and seemingly the only one of significant size at all, the 25 ha site of Umm el-Marra, may contain levels of occupation that are contemporary with the EJ 1 and EME 2 periods, as shown by deep soundings in the acropolis there (Schwartz et al. 2003: 327). Thus, it is difficult to say anything at all about the beginning of the EBA in the Jabbul, other than that it may not have been characterized by any settlement of urban character or proportions. Recent work around Ebla has been forced to adopt a tripartite EBA chronological framework: LC-EB III, EB IVA and EB IVB (see most recently Mantellini et al. 2012). Thus, no sites can be assigned with certainty to a period more precise than roughly the first five centuries of the EBA. In general, though, it can be noted that early EBA sites in the area of Tell Mardikh, where these can be identified, are invariably small, being less than 4 ha, and seem closely restricted to perennial sources of water, i.e. in the area of the Matkh depression (de Maigret 1978, 1981). Recently, the steppe east of Ebla and south of the Jabbul has been subjected to intense geomorphological and

archaeological survey (Morandi Bonacossi, ed. 2007). Results of this work also report a dearth of early EBA remains in this area (Geyer et al. 2007: 275).

In other places, evidence of possible early EBA occupation is sparse, either as a reflection of the actual early EBA situation, or as an artifact of an unrepresentative archaeological sample. During the early part of the EBA, the upland area between the Balikh and Euphrates River seems to have been devoid of tell settlements.<sup>193</sup> The difficulty of securely identifying sites from the earliest centuries of the EBA in the Euphrates River Valley has already been discussed. Meanwhile, evidence of occupation at this time in the Banat embayment is sparse and ambiguous in nature. The possibility of immediately post-LC occupation there comes from two sources, first as an inference of the stratigraphic relationship of the artificial mound “White Monument III”, possibly a mortuary structure located beneath structures dating to Banat period IV (i.e., before 2600 BC) (Porter 2000: 316), and second, by the presence of Uruk tokens and a few sherds found in a secondary context at Tell Kabir (Porter 1995: 142-143, but see Porter 2007c: 9). Early EBA levels are also probably indicated at Tell Shams ed-Din, a low site in the Euphrates River Valley just south of the Tell es-Sweyhat embayment (Wilkinson 2004: 210),<sup>194</sup> and at nearby Tell al-‘Abd (Finkbeiner 1997). Downstream of the Tabqa and Tishrin salvage areas on the Euphrates River the relative density of archaeological excavations is sharply reduced. At Tell Bi’a some early EBA levels have been encountered in deep soundings (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000: 5-7 and 72-101), but

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<sup>193</sup> The only exception to this statement appears to be the 4 ha site of Khirbet Taha identified by survey to belong to the Sweyhat I period (i.e. EME 1/2), located in the uplands on the edge of the Sweyhat embayment (Danti 2000: 273).

<sup>194</sup> Excavations were never carried out at the low, approximately 1.5 ha settlement mound, but J.-W. Meyer has argued for a range of occupation beginning no earlier than the middle of the EBA on the basis of surface finds (Meyer 1991: 107-117).



the nature of settlement at that site in the first half of the third millennium is still unknown, although its excavators feel that early EBA settlement there may have been significant (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000: 1).

In sum, the archaeological record of the early EBA in Syria suggests a process of developing sociopolitical complexity and subsistence specialization correlating with a process of urbanization. The timing of this pattern is most clearly defined in and around the region of the Khabur Triangle, where urbanization reached its peak at the end of the EJ 2 period. Similar developments are known in the Euphrates Valley Region as well though, especially between Carchemish and Tell Bi'a, though this process seems to have been somewhat subdued by comparison, and possibly took place slightly later. Agro-pastoral production strategies seem to characterize settlements from all phases of this period, but in many places a definite long-term trend towards specialization in barley cultivation and sheep/goat husbandry is detectable. Unfortunately, data relevant to the question of how these agricultural and pastoral economic pursuits were integrated, and how that pattern of integration shifted over time or space, is not forthcoming from the archaeological record at this time. Specialization of pastoral production, if it indeed involved mobile pastoral groups, of which no material evidence at this time exists, would have structural implications. If specialized production was 'tethered' to specific sites, as seems to be the case, it is much more likely that a common sociopolitical structure united practitioners of both strategies into a single system, and precluded the existence of segmentary lineage systems.<sup>195</sup> In the case of independent mobile pastoralism, one would expect to find at least some evidence of mobile campsites in the EBA landscape, while in

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<sup>195</sup> At the site of Tell Hajji Ibrahim at the very beginning of the EBA, for instance, there is every indication that a single nuclear family was engaged in both agricultural and pastoral production activities.

the case of more strongly tethered pastoralism, evidence of such occupation would more likely exist within the more immediate environs of sedentary centers of production and, therefore, less likely to have been preserved for posterity. Nevertheless, the presence of mobile pastoral populations has been hypothesized in the region of the Middle Khabur and the area of the Jebel 'Abd al-Aziz, to its west, on the basis of somewhat more indirect evidence. It is more likely, though, that the pattern of development detected in that region can be explained in terms of a similar process of urbanization, complexity, and subsistence specialization that characterized other Syrian landscapes at this time.

### **The Middle Khabur Sites and the Jebel 'Abd al-Aziz Region**

While the cases of the silos and pit houses in the 'zone of uncertainty' appeal to indirect and direct (analogical) evidence of the existence of mobile pastoral groups in these areas, other hypothetical manifestations of mobile pastoral communities in the archaeological literature relate primarily to historical explanations for a perceived shift in the material record. This is the case in the following discussion of the survey results of the Jebel 'Abd al-Aziz region. There, west of the Khabur Triangle, an area of 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>, encapsulating the Jebel 'Abd al-Aziz and abutting the Khabur River Valley in the east, has been surveyed under the auspices of the Yale Khabur Basin Project. Results of this survey have been taken as evidence for the existence of an original or ongoing EBA mobile pastoral population (Kouchoukos 1999: 365). While Kouchoukos did marshal some inferred, indirect, though independent evidence for the presence of such groups, his opinion was primarily informed by an *a priori* assumption that such groups existed, drawing primarily on the arguments of Hole, mentioned above. His primary focus,

though, was simply to explain the pattern of sedentary development in the region over the course of the EBA through reference to mobile pastoralism. A review of his arguments will demonstrate, though, that no specifics of either the sociological or material model of segmentary lineage systems developed here can be cited to support the historical summary that he posits. His argument, instead, is entirely speculative.

Though the results of this survey were never fully published, the EBA results were the subject of Kouchoukos' 1999 dissertation. Some 50 sites were dated to the EBA, divided into two chronological periods (Kouchoukos 1999: 372). The earliest, corresponding to the EJ 1 and 2 periods, consists of 12 sites, while a further 24-26 show evidence of occupation spanning both the EJ 1-2 category and the EJ 3 (Kouchoukos 1999, table 7.4). These sites are all located along now-dry wadi beds, flowing either north or south from the Jebel, toward the Khabur River, and are usually near areas that have been identified as ideal agricultural zones within a landscape otherwise mostly unsuited to such practices (Kouchoukos 1999: 393). Unfortunately, none of these sites has been excavated and it is not possible to comment on the nature of these occupations, nor on any developments taking place in these sites between the EJ 1 and 2 periods (Kouchoukos 1999: 367, 373). Thus, it is not possible to say if human occupation of this landscape dates back to the beginning of the EBA, or developed only in the EJ 2, nor is it possible to comment upon site contemporaneity. All EJ 1/2 sites measure at most 1 ha, though it is possible that larger EJ 1/2 period sites are obscured by much extensive, later EBA settlements above them (Kouchoukos 1999: 373). For that reason, Kouchoukos' analysis suffers from the chronological issue of site contemporaneity, which might also be applied on an intra-site level. In other words, the present preserved extent of the

largest EBA sites in the region may not necessarily reflect the maximum extent of their occupation at any given point during that period. Nevertheless, a chronological pattern of development was described. In the earlier period settlement was sparse and centered on small sites, while in the later period some sites seem to have grown rapidly to urban proportions, before eventually disappearing (Kouchoukos 1999: 373). Kouchoukos explained this process of urbanization in terms of the presence of segmentary mobile pastoral groups and the increasing economic significance of wool (1999: 410). This explanation, though, is entirely arbitrary and is based primarily on Hole's (1991) argument that the presence of such groups is indicated by evidence for modest agricultural surpluses in Middle Khabur sites (1999: 410). While it is clear that agricultural and pastoral pursuits became increasingly integrated in that region at the time, the assumption that such integration took the form of a dimorphic relationship between a population of agriculturalists and a separate population of mobile pastoral producers is purely speculative.

Kouchoukos' mobile pastoral supposition would appear to be bolstered by his ecological analysis of the landscape surrounding the Jebel Abd al-Aziz. This analysis suggested the following conclusions. First, the landscape is characterized by limited agricultural resources, but potentially abundant pasturage, in addition to potentially rich wild resources including flora and fauna for hunting and gathering (1999: 401). The largest sites are all oriented toward ideal agricultural niches, but nevertheless sites in the southern piedmont, specifically, are not located where agricultural productivity would seem to have been capable of supporting them at their apparent maximal extent of sedentary occupation (1999: 387, 391). These sites must have supplemented agricultural

pursuits with pastoral production (1999: 393). This does not, however, necessitate the presence of segmentary, mobile pastoral societies. Kouchoukos also sought to bolster his argument by reference to the idea that the characteristic *kranzhügel* site shape has some functional correlation with mobile pastoralism. This is a theory that is rapidly falling out of favor as a result of increasing architectural resolution of these sites following from excavations and, especially, remote sensing operations. This issue will be discussed in more detail, below.

Kouchoukos' choice to explain the evolution of settlement systems in the area of the Jebel 'Abd al-Aziz with reference to mobile pastoral communities was simply inspired by sympathy for Hole's argument, above, that such groups can be inferred from the presence of agricultural centers on the Middle Khabur, and their subsequent collapse contemporary with the apparent growth of sites in this region. It is a mobile pastoral reading of the material record, with no evidence to favor it over any other interpretation.

### **Kranzhügel-sites and Mobile Pastoralism**

As mentioned above, Kouchoukos found support for the assumption of the existence of mobile pastoral groups in that part of the Syrian Jezireh at the beginning of the EBA on the basis of the so-called *kranzhügel* or 'wreath-mound' sites. Speculation of an association between the distinct form of these sites and the possibility of a central role of pastoralism began with Mallowan (*apud* Kouchoukos 1999: 388), but the earliest investigations were carried out by Van Lière and Lauffray (1954). The hypothesis of a special pastoral connection to this site form has been championed most recently by Lyonnet (2009). While accumulating evidence from these sites supports the significance

of pastoral production, agricultural production also appears to be a significant aspect of their subsistence focus. While the founders of these sites appeared to have pursued a broad base of subsistence resources, by the latter part of the third millennium productive activities reflect the growing barley and sheep/goat production regimes attested throughout Syria (e.g. Meyer 2010a).

The term *kranzhügel* refers to a characteristic shape taken by some tells of the Syrian and Iraqi Jezireh. True *kranzhügel* mounds, of which Tell Chuera is an example, take the form of a circular upper mound with central depression, surrounded by a massive wall and then a concentric lower town with its own surrounding wall. Thus, these sites are seemingly double-walled (e.g. Lyonnet 1998: 181), though excavation has revealed that the walls were built in sequence and were not in use contemporaneously (Smith et al. 2014: 164). Smith et al. (2014) pointed out that these true *kranzhügel*-sites should not be confused with the so-called ‘ring wall settlements’, most of which are found around the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz. It is to these forms that Kouchoukos actually refers in his discussion. Examples of such forms include also Tell Beydar on the western edge of the Khabur. These forms are characterized by circular high mounds without a depression, with surrounding wall, and a lower town, not necessarily circular, with a more visible wall (2014: 164). Both of these forms are associated with the ‘zone of uncertainty’ (Smith et al. 2014: 164).

This location, of course, predisposes these sites to hypotheses of mobile pastoral origins among scholars who assume that such groups must have already existed in this area at the beginning of the EBA. Such seems to have been the case for Van Lière and Lauffray, who, on ecological bases, favored the opinion that enclosure walls in this area

must have served as sheep-folds, though they did note the ubiquity of evidence for agricultural activities at such sites as well (1954). Kouchoukos' own interpretation, though apparently bolstered by this previous scholarship, is essentially a logical conclusion of his premises: that segmentary mobile pastoral groups were in existence in this area already at the beginning of the EBA. To argue, then, that *kranzhügel*-sites point to the existence of such groups is, at best, a denial that any other interpretation is possible and, at worst, a circular argument. Lyonnet more recently reiterated this interpretation (2009; see also 1998). Her impression, though, that EBA *kranzhügel*-sites and 'ring wall settlements' are indicative of a semi-mobile pastoral way of life is still largely informed by ecology and by the impression that the presence of semi-mobile pastoral groups is beyond question: "...the predominance of nomads and/or pastoralists in this area has long been evidenced in texts and sources from the third millennium until present times" (2009: 180). Her impression is also informed by comparison of the western Khabur region at the beginning of the EBA with the same region in the MBA, at which point in time she infers the presence of mobile pastoral population, though on much different evidentiary grounds (1996: 370-372; 2000: 18-19; see discussion below). This dissertation has made these points numerous times, but let them be reiterated here: 1) The existence of such groups in the third millennium has not been established and 2) the assumption that agricultural pursuits would have been insufficient to provide a subsistence base for initial EBA populations is hypothetical, lacking confirmatory evidence from excavations. It also ignores the possibilities offered by hunting and gathering modes of subsistence, coupled with simple agricultural pursuits. In any event, even given the accumulating evidence for pastoral production, there is no evidence that speaks to the manner of social, political, or

economic integration between that pursuit and agriculture. There is no compelling reason to assume the presence of mobile pastoral groups *a priori* and without any confirmatory evidence derived from excavations.

In fact, the publication of more excavation results from sites such as Tell Chuera, for example, indicates that *kranzhügel* sites were not the hollow cities envisioned by Lyonnet (e.g. 1998: 183). Although the lower town of Tell Chuera did contain facilities for storing grain, and herding and processing sheep and goat products, they produced substantial and densely occupied upper mounds, as well (Meyer 2010c). Furthermore, the earliest levels of Tell Chuera indicate that its founders were not mobile pastoralists, but rather pursued a broad base of subsistence, which included agricultural pursuits (Vila 2010). Tell Chuera ultimately obtained its characteristic form only during the EJ 3 period, following the development of a specialized agro-pastoral economy that characterizes most of known Syria at this time. All of this evidence contradicts Lyonnet's argument (e.g. Schwartz 2011: 680). There would appear to be no compelling reason to understand the inhabitants or founders of Tell Chuera as 'mobile', nor is it at all clear what insight such an attribution would provide an understanding of that settlement's sociopolitical character or history relative to any other EBA settlement in Syria.

Although it is possible that mobile pastoral groups, even with segmentary systems, were ultimately the founders of *kranzhügel* sites, such an interpretation lacks specific supporting evidence. The idea that such groups could then continue to exist without substantial socio-political friction and change, also, requires special explanation on the basis of the model developed in Chapter 3. If such groups did exist—and there is no archaeological evidence to support that supposition—the foundation of cities would



indicate their radical, structural transformations to sedentary agricultural societies, even if pastoralism remained paramount in terms of both economy and subsistence. Tell Chuera's excavator, though, still argues for the existence of features of "segmentary tribal societies", such as intramural, below house private burials (despite the existence of extra-mural cemeteries), which he believes are indicative of 'ancestor worship', a feature to be correlated with 'tribalism' (Meyer 2010b: 210). Meyer's model of tribalism and its relationship with sedentarization differs significantly from that developed here, and is related, in some of its features, with an increasingly popular treatment of mobile pastoralism, 'tribalism', and ancestors among scholars of the ancient Near East.

### **Tribalism and Ancestors at Tell Banat**

In the last fifteen years, a topic increasingly commonly invoked as a correlate of mobile pastoralism has been that of ancestors. This has resulted primarily from the work of Anne Porter and relates, in its initial conception at least, primarily to the site of Tell Banat. Peltenburg, for instance, stated that, today "it is generally accepted that pastoral tribes with their emphasis on mobility, kin-based descent groups and reference to ancestors underpin many of the features that broadly distinguished North from South Mesopotamia during the Bronze Age" (2007/2008: 215). Peltenburg mustered only five citations to justify this "generally accepted" characterization of Bronze Age society, only two of which refer specifically to ancestors, both articles published by Anne Porter in 2002 and both drawn more or less directly from her 2000 dissertation, dealing exclusively with the excavated material of Tell Banat. Porter, however, made a more subtle point about the association of ancestors to 'pastoral tribes' than can be distilled from the

citation drawn from Peltenburg. First, she did not *prima facie* associate tribalism with a special ideological significance for ancestors. She did, however, define the term tribalism in a somewhat unique and problematic way, purely as a type of social organization (2000: 84), bound together through “‘kinship,’ ‘territorialism,’ and ‘descent’”(2000: 53), and independent of any other political and cultural characteristics (2000: 91).

Porter’s definition of tribalism, in fact, falls prey to the confusion surrounding the terms and their association with contemporary ‘tribal’ populations that was described in Chapters 2 and 3. In one way, her definition relates to that offered by Richard Tapper, cited at the beginning of Chapter 3. For Porter, tribes are not discrete political units opposed to the state, or types of societies, but rather they are an *aspect* of society. She argues that, in fact, tribalism should not even be considered a political phenomenon at all (Porter 2000: 82-85, 2012: 59).<sup>196</sup> Instead, she argues:

The tribe... should be defined as a set of *social* relationships based on idioms and/or practices of kinship and descent as the means through which people understand their place in society and the nature of their relationships with others. No necessary nature to that place, no necessary nature to those relationships should be assigned, however, for each group may define both the rules that create their social relationships and the various ways in which they practice them as they wish.

Porter 2012: 59, original emphasis

Instead of erring simply by the observation that ethnohistorically-attested ‘tribes’ share significant social and cultural features with sedentary societies, and thus concluding that there is no specific political difference between such societies in the past, Porter instead rejects the division of societies on the basis of any structure comparable to the evolutionary division of *societas* and *civitas*. But because she retains the connotation of

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<sup>196</sup> This view is not entirely unique, cf. Glatzer 2002: 266.

tribalism that followed from these earlier evolutionary systems—kinship—she defines tribalism as *any* kind of social system with a reference to kinship. By her definition, then, every human society, and possibly a good number of primates, must have ‘tribal’ components. Such a definition of tribalism is not useful. It degrades it to a mere synonym of ‘social system’. It also still serves to obscure the potential structural difference between mobile pastoral and sedentary societies as indicated by segmentary lineage systems, a concept which she dismisses as “now largely discredited or abandoned in much of anthropology” (2012: 49).<sup>197</sup> The term tribal, then, as defined by Porter, may be used as much to characterize mobile pastoral societies as sedentary agricultural societies (2000: 50), even those that might have been labeled ‘chiefdoms’ in a neo-evolutionary system of categorization owing to political hierarchy (2000: 84).

Porter associated ancestors as an epiphenomenon of tribal societies, as she defined them: “In any social system where descent plays a prominent role... the forebears who constitute the line, or web, of descent are attributed a singular condition. They are ancestors” (2002a: 8). She specifically associated one *structural pose* of ancestors with mobile pastoral societies and another with sedentary agricultural societies. In the latter, she said that ancestors tend to be discrete individuals and serve the purpose of

transmitting property rights through inheritance, while she postulated that, in the former,

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<sup>197</sup> As this study takes a reanalysis and revision of segmentary lineage theory as its fundamental theoretical foundation, that opinion forms the most significant departure with Porter’s own study. While Porter’s understanding of the relationship between sedentary and mobile pastoral aspects of EBA Syrian societies is socio-politically and culturally fluid, it is here maintained that the presence or absence of habitually mobile pastoral groups in EBA Syria is directly relevant to the question of how agricultural and pastoral activities and EBA populations were integrated in structural terms. This, then, has implications for the social, political, and cultural integration of these two aspects of the EBA economy. If a development towards or away from the existence of mobile pastoral groups in the archaeological or historical records can be detected, these shifts would need to be explained in terms of structural changes effected by contingent historical and/or environmental situations. As discussed in Chapter 3, this perspective is informed by developments in ethnological thought relating to the nature of segmentary lineage systems that have reached their theoretical floruit only in the last few decades.

where territorial associations are fluid, transitory, or disrupted on a regular basis, space is a primary factor of destabilization, and ancestors often consist of a generalized group in which deceased individuals are subsumed into the group to perpetuate a communal identity and territorial association.

Porter 2002a: 8

In this way, Peltenberg's statement above is technically correct, though what Porter means by 'tribal' is often at odds with other definitions of the term, both implicit and explicit.

Porter was ostensibly inspired to develop her model of tribalism and its relationship to two different structural poses of ancestors by the curious mortuary characteristics of Tell Banat. The two most striking mortuary features of Tell Banat are the so-called White Monument, also known as Tell Banat North, located north of the primary collection of mounds comprising the site, and the monumental Tomb 7, associated with the apparently monumental, successively built Buildings 6 and 7. Upon excavation, the one hundred meter diameter, twenty meters high conical-shaped earthen mound, Tell Banat North, was found to be artificial, having been built in at least four stages over the course of three to four hundred years and incorporating the fragmentary, skeletal remains from secondary burials of both humans, equids, and bovids (Porter 2002b: 160, 165). The earliest version of the mound reached by excavators, White Monument IV, contains evidence of many re-plasterings on its surface along with some sherds diagnostic of period IV at Tell Banat, or roughly the EME 3 period (Porter 2000: 320). In the next phase, the surface of White Monument IV was cut into, and fragmentary human remains were deposited into these cuts. This phase was also associated with Banat Period IV pottery (Porter 2000: 321), and thus EME 3. In the next phase, White Monument II, these earlier phases were covered by a terra pisé coating

(Porter 2000: 322). As shown by erosion and re-plastering of this surface, some time passed between before the final enlargement of the mound, White Monument I (Porter 2000: 322), which was preserved at a 100 m diameter and 20 m in height (Porter 2000: 331). This phase contained disarticulated human and animal bones and objects (Porter 2000: 332). All of these aspects suggested, to Porter, the presence of ancestors as an undifferentiated group, stressing the existence of a kin-based, communal system (2002a; 2002b). By contrast, the contemporary Tomb 7, apparently built in the EME 3 period along with Building 7, consists of 5 chambers, constructed from dressed stones, with baked brick floors covered in bitumen. Its roof was composed of limestone slabs each weighing more than one metric ton (Porter 2002b: 158). It constitutes a monumental version of the popular shaft-and-chamber tomb variety so well attested throughout the valley from Carchemish to Mari in the latter part of the EBA. This sort of construction, to Porter, stressed individuality and specific identity, standing in ideological opposition to the White Monument, creating a sociopolitical contradiction that ultimately ended with the collapse of the sociopolitical system there (2002a; 2002b).

The question relevant to this discussion is whether or not the phenomenon of ancestors, or any specific structural pose of ancestors, correlates epiphenomenally or otherwise, with mobile pastoralism or, specifically, segmentary lineage systems. Although she discounts segmentary lineage phenomenon, it is clear that, to Porter, ancestors as bastions of communal identity, exerting a sort of centripetal force on a society, would correlate at least with a mobile society (2002a: 28). There are reasons, however, to doubt Porter's assumed correlation. First and foremost is the counter-argument she herself supplied in a footnote prior to establishing this correlation:

There are of course many societies that do have a cult of the dead, or practice ancestor worship, without manifesting any trace of a lineage or descent system, as well as societies that are organized into lineages but place no significance on ancestors structurally or ideologically (Freedman 1967: 90), but these are not of concern here.

Porter 2002a: 4

This contradiction in her premise cannot be explained by this author, and the illumination of what exactly was meant must await clarification. I maintain, however, that such exceptions to Porter's deduced association are, obviously, of great concern—enough so to cast doubt on the assumption that the presence of ancestors, in any structural pose, can be used as evidence to support the existence of a mobile pastoral society characterized by a segmentary lineage system.

The question of the relationship between ancestors, and any specific structural pose, with segmentary lineage societies, can be easily addressed through reference to ethnographic literature. Indeed, in the relevant societies discussed in Chapter 3, the Yomut Turkmen and the Sarhadi Baluch, ancestors did play a role in structuring society, but only in the sense that specific agnatic genealogies were necessary to construct the nested hierarchy of political segments that provided the context for moral-political actions in those societies. The ancestors could not, in any meaningful way, be said to be “a generalized group” as Porter argues must be the case for mobile pastoralists (2002a: 8), and in fact the logic of such a system seems to guarantee the preservation of the individuality, by name and structural position, of ancestors who serve as important nodes in the dendritic pattern of agnatic lineages. They did not otherwise have particularly important structural functions, and relationships to the ancestors did not provide any special sources of moral or political sanction in either of those societies. Even among the Basseri, as studied by Barth, where the economic system was founded upon mobile

pastoralism and household interactions in camp groups were still defined by segmentary politics, though not properly a segmentary lineage system, most individuals could not provide genealogies of any great depth or accuracy (1961: 30). This was owing completely to the fact that the segmentary lineage system had been obliterated by new economic relationships necessitating a changing political strategy. At the same time, among the Safi Pashtuns of Afghaniya, as studied by Evans-von Krbek, a post-segmentary lineage, sedentary, agricultural society, despite the importance of inheritance structures in transferring private property in the form of agricultural fields, which were crucial to a household's ability to remain economically viable, ancestors were not particularly important structural features, especially beyond the most recently deceased generation (1977: 126-27). It would seem, then, that Porter's proposed correlation should be reversed. Mobile pastoral societies possessing a segmentary lineage system tend to emphasize the specific identity of some ancestors, whereas among sedentary societies, or mobile pastoral societies where the segmentary lineage system is defunct, beyond a generation or two, ancestors dissolve into anonymity.

In none of these societies, though, do ancestors serve as a significant source of ritual interest, either in segmentary lineage societies specifically, or even more broadly to include sedentary 'tribes' like those mentioned by Tapper. This would seem to be a fatal flaw in Porter's argument, then, and, of course, it is one that she was forced to address:

Pastoral tribes in the Middle East and North Africa are clearly acknowledged to be defined, or to define themselves by, the use of descent structures and lineage systems, whether these fit the model of segmentary organization or not (Eickelman 1981; Khazanov 1984: 119-120), and lists of genealogical connections, discussions of marriage rules, abound. But what is harder to find in the literature... is any deliberation of the place of ancestors in these groups, why ancestors are known or not known, what they are conceived of as actually doing, how they are thought of. There are no doubt several reasons for

this, including the prevalence of a materialist rather than a social basis for most such studies, the conflation of political structure with social structure, and other theoretical considerations. From the literature one would think that ancestors in Middle Eastern societies have never had an active social role, or place in the ideological depiction of social life...

It may be argued that the introduction of Islam led to critical social changes amongst pastoralists in these regions... The role of ancestors acting as a moral, mediating, legitimating force: in defining unity and continuity of the social group: and in delineating complex spatio-temporal territorial relationships was arguably transposed in Northern Africa at least, to Muslim saints or marabouts, persons living or dead who are thought to have a special, intermediary relationships with God, and around whom various rituals, sacrifices and offerings are practiced (Eickelman 1981: 222; Marx 1984: 13; Insoll 1999: 176, 183-7).

Porter 2000: 137-39

The lack of ancestors among contemporary 'tribal' societies, can, she claimed, be attributed to two factors: the inadequacy of the vast majority of ethnographic studies and the influence of Islam, resulting from historical contingency, and, apparently, its ideological opposition to a role of structural significance for ancestors. Neither reason is particularly compelling. Porter cited only two examples in all of Middle Eastern, North African, and Asian ethnographic literature where she perceived ancestors as serving a functional purpose similar to what she expected should be the norm, once in a Lebanese village (Peters 1970) and once in Mongolia (Humphrey 1979). If the invisibility of ancestors were really due to ethnographic shortcomings, one would expect more compelling evidence, even if it were present only in a minority of studies. Furthermore, such critiques are not applicable to the examples explored in Chapter 3, where authors were explicit about the role of ancestors and the consciousness of individuals in each society of their ancestors and their relationships to them. Perhaps having sensed the inadequacy of this argument, Porter then invoked the introduction of Islam into the region as a specific historically contingent event that explains either the overall obfuscation or complete eradication of ancestor practices in some of these societies. The introduction of



a historical contingency into her discussion exposes Porter's argument as essentially functionalist, ahistorical, and inadequate. Islam as a historical contingency only demonstrates that any other historical contingency might also obfuscate her assumed connection between ancestors and 'tribalism', whatever the structural pose. This serves to destroy the privileged ideological position which she assumes for ancestors and, as such, we are forced to abandon the *a priori* assumption that there is any inherent connection between the special presence or form of ancestor traditions in 'tribal' societies—however those are defined—or any specific structural poses associated with mobile pastoral or segmentary lineage societies.

Appreciation for the potential ideological and structural significance of ancestors in archaeological circles comes primarily from an association with property rights and inheritance and is commonly traced back to two recent sources, Arthur Alan Saxe (1970) and Claude Meillassoux (1972) (cf. Whitley 2002: 120-21). Saxe, writing in the heyday of the American school of processual archaeology, constructed a dissertation aimed at cross-culturally testing eight hypotheses for exploitation in explaining the sociological significance of burial practices among archaeological populations. The eighth hypothesis that he tested, and that which proved to be the most popular for discussion among both supporters and detractors stated that

To the Degree that Corporate Group Rights to Use and/or Control Crucial but Restricted Resources are Attained and/or Legitimized by Means of Lineal Descent from the Dead (i.e., Lineal Ties to Ancestors), Such Groups Will Maintain Formal Disposal Areas for the Exclusive Disposal of Their Dead, and Conversely.

1970: 119

Saxe's hypothesis is meant to be a cross-culturally applicable adaptation of another, more specific hypothesis originating from the work of the anthropologist Mervyn Meggitt

among the Enga people of Papua New Guinea (cf. 1970: 120). Among the Mae Enga of highland Papua New Guinea, Meggitt observed both a relatively strong patrilineal and patrilocal focus in the formation of corporate groups and a high amount of competition for land suitable for gardening, the primary subsistence activity, which set that group apart from other neighboring highland societies. He hypothesized that these two phenomena were correlated:

where the members of a homogenous society of horticulturalists distinguish in any consistent fashion between agnates and other relatives, the degree to which social groups are structured in terms of agnatic descent and patrilocality varies with the pressure on available agrarian resources.

1965a: 266

Meggitt felt that a subsequent comparative analysis of a number of highland societies known at the time justified the validity of this hypothesis throughout the highlands, but he was cautious in attempting to apply the model beyond Papua New Guinea (1965a: 270).

Saxe claims to “have merely carried Meggitt’s formulation one step further” (1970: 121), but in reality he took a number of liberties in expanding Meggitt’s hypothesis, and these revisions have been the focus of subsequent scholars, especially Goldstein, who, in her own dissertation, sought to revise Saxe’s eighth hypothesis (1976). First, Saxe changed Meggitt’s ‘land’ to ‘vital resource’. Second, Saxe changed the paternal focus of Meggitt’s original hypothesis to ‘lineal descent’. Both of these changes are more or less logical adaptations of Meggitt, intended to increase the cross-culturally applicability of the hypothesis (Goldstein 1976: 37). The last and, as Goldstein points out, the most fundamental change was “the extension of the hypothesis to include disposal and treatment of the dead” (ibid). This change resulted not from the desire to

increase the potential cross-cultural applicability of the hypothesis, but rather to relate it to the topic at hand in Saxe's dissertation—mortuary practices. This extension is based upon Saxe's reading of another report about the Mae Enga written by Meggitt, this time for an edited volume dealing with religion in New Guinea and the New Hebrides (Meggitt and Lawrence, eds. 1965). There, Meggitt explained that Mae Enga religious and ritual life accorded well with the paternal lineage system:

On the one hand, rituals regularly reaffirm the cohesion and continuity of the patrilineal group; on the other, the dogma in itself implies a title to land by relating living members of the group to a founding ancestor who is believed to have first selected that locality for settlement.

1965b: 131

Saxe cited Meggitt as having there expanded his original hypothesis, linking ecology, patrilineality, and patrilocalty "to rituals which legitimize the control of vital resources" (1970: 121). This would seem to justify Saxe's own extension of Meggitt's original hypothesis to relate to the treatment of dead, as pointed out by Goldstein:

One the basis of ritualization of ancestors, this addition makes some sense. If one were to stress the importance of ancestors, it would be logical that one might also venerate the area in which the ancestors were buried, i.e. there would be a specialized formal disposal area...

1976: 37

In fact, it does not seem to be the case that Meggitt intended to extend his original hypothesis in this way. The article in question was aimed simply at an investigation of Mae Enga religion, and though an extension could be implied, one would think that if Meggitt intended to integrate it into his original hypothesis, it would have appeared in his monograph, published the same year, or that the hypothesis there would have been included or referenced in this shorter treatise. Saxe's suspect adaptation of Meggitt's observations about Mae Enga religion, and the association of lineal descent and the

transmission of rights to ‘vital resources’, to mortuary practice must be understood purely as his own invention. Nevertheless, as Morris argued, “this need not mean we have to abandon his hypothesis” (1991: 151). At the same time, though, it would suggest that Saxe’s eighth hypothesis is really just pure speculation, only barely tested in his own dissertation and which, Goldstein points out, doesn’t even apply for the Mae Enga (1976: 42). In reality, there is something of an historical precedent for Saxe’s eighth hypothesis and though it may be understood perhaps more accurately as inspired by Meggitt’s New Guinean hypothesis relating competition for land and patrilineal corporate groups rather than an adaptation of that theory, it need not have been constructed in such a contrived fashion. This is because, as Morris (1991: 150) pointed out, the idea that private property correlates with an elevated role for ancestors and the spatial organization of mortuary features can be traced back at least as far as Fustel de Coulanges (1864) and Maine (1883: 116).

One need hardly discuss the specific points cited in the post-processual critique of Saxe’s eighth hypothesis and its revision in 1976 by Lynne Goldstein, largely because no specific points of criticism were offered. Instead, the rejection of the Saxe/Goldstein Hypothesis follows precisely the same lines as the ideological rejection of any such Processual laws: they preclude the investigation of ideology by constructing a dichotomy between function and meaning, which are, in actuality, recursively related. As Hodder said of Saxe’s eighth hypothesis, then:

There has, of course, been a recent increase in attempts made within a processual framework to discuss ideology and legitimation, and the hypothesis of Saxe concerning the use of burial to legitimate access to resources... is an example of such developments. But, as already indicated, such a framework tends to relegate ideology to an epiphenomenon of the assumed primacy of functional contingencies and does not adequately consider the particular symbolic meanings

of the monuments and rituals. The Saxe hypothesis not only presents a relatively passive view of society, but also, more clearly it disregards the cultural context so central to ideology and ideological functions. When individuals act socially, they do so within a framework of meaning and this framework is relative and historically constructed. Without consideration of the cultural context one cannot hope to understand the effects of past social actions.

1984: 53

The ignorance of cultural context that can be found in the Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis was explored by Ian Morris (1991) in a comparison of Athenian mortuary practices and ancestor rituals from the fifth to first centuries BC, with corresponding Roman practices from the second century BC to the second century AD, both historically attested periods where the cultural contexts and historical contingencies responsible for those contexts can be investigated. Despite a number of formal similarities between the treatment and placing of the dead in both of these societies, Morris demonstrated how “formal cemeteries provided a non-verbal language for the discussion of important questions about descent and property; but both the grammar of this language and the particular statements made in it were shaped by the outcome of larger conflicts” (1991: 161).

In fifth- and fourth-century Athens, an ‘official’ ideology of a strong, unitary descent group monopolizing political power and land was underwritten by very closed cemeteries, even though in practice access to the graveyards was wider than the citizen body alone. In Rome, a comparable citizen body controlling important rights and privileges existed, but it was far more permeable, as were its cemeteries. Within the citizen descent group, funerary ritual marked out a more restricted aristocratic group which wielded incomparable vaster power and asserted an ideology entirely different from what was possible for the élite within the Athenian state.

Ibid.

In other words, Saxe’s eighth hypothesis did apply to the test cases that Morris adopted, but only on a broad, theoretical level, and “simply inferring a concern for property transmission from the existence of formal cemeteries or from their increasing elaboration produces gross misunderstandings” (ibid). The point that Morris demonstrated so

eloquently in his study is that which Hodder was making abstractly, above. It was the context of social reproduction, the recursive interaction between actions and structures, the historically contingent circumstances so difficult to pursue from purely archaeological grounds, that explained the significance of mortuary practices and ideas about ancestors at any particular point in time in either Athens or Rome.

Saxe's eighth hypothesis erred, then, in attempting to identify the social significance of changing mortuary practices simply through the association of greater formality in mortuary practice with greater competition for 'crucial but restricted resources'. As Morris stated, then, "the Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis will only be one way among many to read a complex discourse" (1991: 163). Nevertheless, the application of Saxe's eighth hypothesis on a wider, and higher, more theoretical level, divorced from any specific assumptions regarding the social significance of a practice, seems to serve as an important bit of 'theoretical capital' coming from the processual movement. It does generally seem to be the case that mortuary practices and ancestors are realms where discourse concerning descent and inheritance take place, even when that which is inherited is as generalized as group membership or citizenship, as in Athens or Rome.

In the 1990s, ancestors that were divorced from this association with descent and inheritance constituted a large part of the scholarly dialogue surrounding British prehistory. These ancestors, nevertheless, seem to have arrived on the shores of the British Isles from the banks of American processualism, carried by the Saxe/Goldstein Hypothesis by way of a specific ethnographic example: the Merina of Madagascar. As Whitley described, in the British Isles ancestors were invoked because of monumental Neolithic mortuary structures, by comparison with the mortuary monuments of the

Merina, a group among which ancestors play a crucial structural role (2002: 120).

Initially, there was thought to have been a link between early agricultural societies and the structural significance of ancestors as guarantors of inheritance and property, but, as Whitley observed, “It is slightly odd then that the obsession with Neolithic ‘ancestors’ has increased in direct proportion to the degree that the ‘agricultural’ basis of these societies has been questioned” (2002: 121). In prehistoric Britain, Whitley complained, “there are too many ancestors... and they are being asked to do too much” (2002: 119).

Ancestors, then, may have been overused in British prehistory and expected to account for too much behavior. The same critique, however, cannot, or at least not yet, really be made of the EBA Syrian Euphrates. The existence of ‘specially bounded areas for the disposal of the dead’ there, along with chronological trends in the development of mortuary spaces and monuments clearly suggests that mortuary practice, and possibly practices of ancestor worship or veneration, had some structural and ideological significance, very probably in relation to descent and inheritance, at least in very broad terms. As Morris warned, however, it is difficult to draw any more conclusion than this without adequate cultural contextualization.

The question remains, then, of whether or not such practices can or should be associated with any specific subsistence practice, such as mobile pastoralism, or any corollary of a segmentary lineage systems, as such systems have been defined in this dissertation. The question is here answered emphatically in the negative. As the previous discussion demonstrated, the ideological significance of ancestors seems to vary widely, regardless of other cultural criteria. It should not be surprising that ancestor ideologies, in whatever form they take, interact with mortuary practices and, together, can

form what Morris called a “a non-verbal language for the discussion of important questions about descent and property” (1991: 161), but the evidence that the language exists, the only point which concerns us at this point in the discussion, is far different from the evidence needed to interpret any dialogue taking place in that language. What seems safe to conclude from the previous discussion is that one function of ancestor ideologies can be the definition of group boundaries, for whatever purpose. From one perspective then, ancestors can be communal and shared within a group, while from another perspective they are exclusionary and serve to define the social and/or political boundaries of groups. Their structural pose, whether communal or exclusionary, is a matter of perspective, and so ancestors might be understood as having more than a single pose at any given point in time, depending on which level one is referencing at the time. In this way, then, there is nothing to say that ancestors are necessarily excluded from segmentary lineage societies, which make the same group distinctions that other societies do, especially sedentary agriculturalists, where they can serve simultaneously corporate and exclusionary functions. At the same time, however, there is nothing that privileges their existence, or any specific structural function in a mortuary context for segmentary lineage systems, either.

The claim Peltenburg is cited as making at the beginning of this section, that “pastoral tribes” have a special connection or affinity to ancestors (2007/2008: 215), cannot be supported, but neither does it yet seem to be a majority opinion among scholars of the ancient Near East. Porter’s assumption that a specific ‘structural pose’ of ancestors, as inferred from mortuary practices, can be associated with a mobile pastoral segment of the population is also dubious, as the discussion of the shortcomings of



Saxe's eighth hypothesis, above, shows. This is for two reasons. First, an assumption that the White Monument at Tell Banat 'means' heterarchy is speculative in this case, but also because, even if it had that meaning and no others, such an argument cannot be confined to segmentary lineage societies. The appearance of mortuary contexts, possibly associated with the veneration of 'ancestors' on the Euphrates during the EBA, is clear. Any connection to mobile pastoralism, or specifically segmentary lineage systems, is purely speculative.

### **The middle EBA arid expansion of sedentary settlement systems**

The development of *kranzhügel* sites in the 'zone of uncertainty'—both properly defined as per Smith et al. (2014), and also the so-called ring-wall settlements, such as those identified by the Yale survey, discussed above—fits a broader pattern of sedentary expansion into arid zones of northern and western Syria culminating in a mid-third millennium peak of sedentary occupation of the landscape. This expansion of settlement is also associated with evidence of increasingly specialized and intensive agricultural practices. An increasing homogenization of material culture throughout the area at this time suggests increasing economic and cultural integration. This period constitutes the apparent physical and political apogee of sedentary, agricultural society in Syria during the EBA—the climax of the so-called "Second Urban Revolution" (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 233). The proliferation of monumental architecture and wealth inequality in mortuary contexts, such as at Tell Banat, above, suggests Syrian societies at this time were increasingly subject to economic inequality and political hierarchy. Thousands of cuneiform texts retrieved from Tell Mardikh, the site of ancient Ebla, attest

to this and demonstrate that it was characterized by a high degree of sociopolitical complexity as well. The Syrian landscape at this time was dominated by multi-sited polities. The economic activities of these polities were coordinated and controlled by bureaucracies headed by elite families who justified their position ideologically.

Wilkinson (2009) and colleagues (2012) have argued that the arid expansion of human settlement, such as documented in the Yale survey of the Jebel 'Abd al-Aziz region at this time, was both made possible and inspired by increasing economic and political integration. Thus, the expansion of settlement in the arid regions of Syria at this time was a result of controlled, centrally organized and integrated agro-pastoral production. This implies that at least those pastoral producers associated with this expanded sedentary occupation of the landscape were economically and politically integrated with that society. No evidence of independent mobile pastoral producers, though, exists at this time.

The emergence of urban and truly 'state' societies by the EJ 3 period, as indicated in the Ebla texts<sup>198</sup> is complemented by various kinds of archaeological data. Survey data from some areas, for instance, indicate the operation of a phenomenon of 'in-gathering'—the growth of a central place at the cost of the depopulation of its rural hinterland—at this time, a cross-cultural process most familiar to Near Eastern scholars, perhaps, in the example of the alluvium of southern Mesopotamia during the ED I period (Adams and Nissen 1972: 12, 87), which was noted in some locations in the Khabur, discussed above, as early as the end of the EJ 2 period. In both Northern and Southern Mesopotamia this process seems to have been a culmination of the development of sociopolitical hierarchy. At Tell al-Hawa, just east of the Khabur Triangle during the

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<sup>198</sup> The features of EJ 3 society indicated by these texts is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

‘later’ third millennium, i.e. in the post Ninevite-5 third millennium period (EJ 3-5), satellite settlements around the site were abandoned while the main tells approach their maximum size. Tell al-Hawa attained 66 ha at this time and showed a high density of occupation on the high tell (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 51), perhaps accounting for the disappearance of its satellites (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 53). Results of a survey around Tell Leilan similarly confirm the centralization of population there, despite overall growth of the settlement system (Ristvet apud Wossink 2009: 96).<sup>199</sup> Results from a survey around Tell Hamoukar are similar. There, in the mid-to-late third millennium, the lower town was densely occupied, with the extent of occupation at the site reaching 98 ha, but there is continuity of settlement in the hinterlands from the EJ 2 period shown by six satellite habitation sites, half of which appear to be new foundations at that time (Ur 2010b: 106). The Tell Beydar Survey also indicates expansion in site sizes and total settled area around that site in the latter half of the EBA, though these sites are very small and sparse (Ur 2004: 175).

Whether or not the in-gathering phenomenon was widespread, increasing sociopolitical complexity is suggested by a pattern of site size and population growth that is clear in nearly every region in Syria during the middle of the third millennium. In the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz region, just southwest of the Khabur Triangle, settlement in the latter half of the EBA—which Kouchoukos estimated to date between 2600 and 2300 BC (thus, primarily the EJ 3 period) (1999: 373)—shows evidence of rapid growth in site sizes, though the absolute number of settlements and their distribution remains almost

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<sup>199</sup> Initial interpretation of the results of the Tell Leilan survey seemed to differ, showing instead an expansion of settlement throughout its catchment at this time (Leilan period II), “strongly suggest[ing] that the centers on the Khabur plains did not expand by depopulating the countryside,” (Stein and Wattenmaker 1990: 15).

unchanged. Of 38 sites identified, ten attain sizes of at least 10 ha, 3 of at least 20 ha, and one site, Mabṭūḥ Šarqī<sup>200</sup> measures 44 ha. All but one of these is classified as a *kranzhügel* site, and all but one of those are believed to contain remains of both the latter and earlier periods of Kouchoukos' binary subdivision of the region (1999, fig. 7.4). The Balikh Drainage Survey also adopted a binary division of the third millennium<sup>201</sup>, and showed a growth in both site numbers and sizes from the earlier to the latter half of the millennium. This growth was modest in the southern part of the drainage, but more pronounced to the north, where aggregate site size and settlement numbers increased by almost one-third (Curvers 1990: 197). The survey also noted the construction of fortified settlements dating to this latter division (Curvers 1990: 197).<sup>202</sup>

In the Euphrates River Valley, the limits of this period are somewhat difficult to define in terms of material culture, but nonetheless complement the picture of emerging complexity and increasing populations evident elsewhere in Syria at this time. The EJ 3 period seems contemporary with all but the earliest portion of EME 3 and approximately the first half of EME 4. This period marks evidence for expanded activities in the area of Tell Banat. In the Tell es-Sweyhat embayment, trends for this period are still difficult to discriminate from earlier and later periods.<sup>203</sup> Periods VI and VII, encapsulating the

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<sup>200</sup> Thus Kouchoukos 1999, fig. 7.4. Elsewhere he referred to the site as Tall Mabtu'ah and reported its size as 45 ha (1999: 378).

<sup>201</sup> Though the end of the latter period is further distinguished from its beginning, as will be discussed below (see Curvers 1990: 200).

<sup>202</sup> Settlement patterns were interpreted to indicate political divisions in the drainage between Tell Bi'a to the south, Tell as-Sawwan and Tell Hammam et-Turkman in the northern zone, and Harran, across the modern border in Turkey (Curvers 1990: 198).

<sup>203</sup> Much difficulty results from ambiguity in the published data. Wilkinson described his survey period VI as the third quarter of the third millennium, which would overlap primarily with the EME 4 period, and assigned it to Holland's phases F and G (2004: 91). Holland differed from Wilkinson by defining phase G as a wider and earlier stretch of time, from 2700-2350 BC, and associated it with Wilkinson's survey period V, without commenting on the disparity (2006: 16). Wilkinson treated his survey periods VI and VII (late EBA) together in his synthesis (2004: 138), ostensibly uncertain in his ability to distinguish between them. Holland's statement that "Wilkinson's survey in the surrounding plain identified eight other sites with Early

second half of the third millennium, are treated together in Wilkinson's synthesis, ostensibly due to uncertainty in distinguishing between them. As a whole, this period shows a break in occupation from earlier sites, and the growth of satellites at a distance of approximately 3-4 ha from Tell es-Sweyhat, with the exception of Tell Hajji Ibrahim. Wilkinson summarized "thus the dispersed straggle of small Sweyhat Survey Period V settlements had by Sweyhat Survey Periods VI or VII been transformed into a hierarchy comprising a center at Tell es-Sweyhat..." (2004: 138).<sup>204</sup> Expansion of settlement dating to this period has also been detected in the Sajour and Qoueiq regions (Matthers 1978; de Contenson 1985: 106, 119, 176), the Amuq (Casana 2003, 2007; Yener et al. 2000; Casana and Wilkinson 2005), around Ebla (Mazzoni 1999-2000), around Hama (Bartl and al-Maqdissi 2007), Homs (Philip et al. 2005; Philip 2007), Qatna (Cremaschi et al. 2008; Morandi Bonacossi 2007, 2009), and in the Akkar Plain (Thalmann 2007).

The only good evidence for a contradiction to this pattern of growth in the third quarter of the third millennium can be found in the salvage zone below Hasseke, though evidence is mixed. EJ 3 levels can be detected at Tells Rad Shaqrah (Kolinsky 1996; Bielinski 1996), Kerma (Saghieh 1991), al-Raqa'i (Schwartz 2015a), Gudeda (Fortin 1995: 44-53, Fortin 2002-2003: 113-116), Atij (Fortin 1989), Melebiya (Lebeau 1993), Bderi (Pfälzner 1990), Kneidig (Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005: 15), and likely at Mulla

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Bronze Age III [Phase G] occupation..." (2006: 383), though, seems to indicate that he considers Phase G to be commensurate with Wilkinson's periods VI and VII because, if he meant to reference Wilkinson's survey period V, the number should be ten sites, while if he meant to reference period VI alone, it should be five sites. It is only if he means to reference Wilkinson's aggregated period VI and/or VII sites that his number agrees with Wilkinson's data. Finkbeiner correlated the end of phase G with the end of the EME 3 period (2015: 40, pl. 2). It should be noted, though, that Holland's discussion of the Period G pottery contains comparanda to Banat periods 4 and 3 (2006: 114-116), which correspond to Porter's Euphrates phases 3 and 4 (and thus EME 3 and 4), respectively.

<sup>204</sup> There is, however, the possibility of some further developments between mid-third millennium and later periods, as four of the eight satellites demonstrate discontinuity from Wilkinson's survey periods VI to VII, according to his tables 7.2 and 7.3 (2004: 152-153).

Maṭar, where they might have been preceded by a hiatus corresponding to most or all of the EJ 1 and 2 periods (Sürenhagen 1990: 137-144). Although some of these sites, such as Tell al-Raqa'i, possibly indicate decreased settlement at this time, others continue the trend of dense occupation detected in early EJ 2 and 1 levels. For instance, excavations at Melebiya have encountered dense blocks of private residences throughout the site (Lebeau 1993: 47-49).

Increasing evidence, gathered mostly in the last decade, shows that in addition to the growth of established settlement systems, long-term tell-based settlement in Syria also expanded southwards and eastwards into traditionally drier areas, deeper into the modern 'zone of uncertainty'. This is true in the Jabbul Plain, where evidence suggests significant expansion in settlement beginning at this time (Yukich 2013: 388). South of the Jabbul, settlement also expanded into the Khanasser Valley, the Jebel al-Has, and the el-Matkh salt Marshes (Rigot 2003; de Maigret 1978: 88-89). This expansion has also been noted further to the south, around micro-ecological zones which would have had high agricultural productivity (Geyer et al. 2007: 275). For instance, occupation of the site of al-Rawda, 70 km northeast of Qatna, seems to have begun in the middle of this period (Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 602). Franco-Syrian excavations at this site, taking place since 2002, illustrate the urban character of settlement and human use of even the drier parts of the Syrian landscape that were newly settled beginning in the second half of the third millennium. This low, approximately 20 ha site, is located in the arid region south of Aleppo and 70 km northeast of Qatna, beyond the 200 mm isohyet and well within the 'zone of uncertainty' (Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 601, 603). It is not a true *kranzhügel*, but instead conforms to the definition of a ring-wall settlement.

Geomagnetic survey has indicated 11 ha of densely built-up space divided by concentric radial streets, with all but a 4 ha outer suburb being encapsulated by a fortification wall, with another, interior fortification wall identifiable in the center of the site. This has led its excavators to suggest that the site was planned by a central political authority (Gondet and Castel 2004). No locations of exclusively secular political authority have yet been identified, but three different religious complexes have been preliminarily identified, two of those following an *antentempel* plan (Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 606). Evidence from excavations has demonstrated that the site was founded at approximately 2400 BC (2007: 602). Its occupants relied on a mixed agro-pastoral subsistence strategy that included not only barley, but also peas, olives, and grapes, made possible by the site's location in a *fayda*—the floor of a broadly expanded wadi bed (2007: 603-604; Moulin and Barge 2005 *apud* Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 604). In addition to sheep and goat, there is also evidence of domestic cattle and pig, indicating at least some aspects of a thoroughly sedentary production strategy at the site (Vila and El Besso 2006: 117). Although its excavators stressed the necessity of pastoral modes of production to account for the size of the site and its arid location, there is little evidence that the site interacted with a specific mobile pastoral element independent from its sociopolitical identity. Nearby structures understood as correlating with pastoral activities relating to the site are all within a few kilometers and are not placed into a broader context (Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 610-611). Certainly, no indications of EBA campsites have been reported. While the excavators may be right to stress the complicated relationship between sedentary and pastoral producers at Tell al-Rawda in the latter part of the EBA, it does not seem that this relationship would have included segmentary lineage systems.

Thus, their understanding of Tell al-Rawda as a ‘tribal confederation’ similar to how the toponym Ibal<sup>205</sup> from the Ebla archives has been interpreted<sup>206</sup>, carries implications of mobile pastoralism that do not seem to be supported by the evidence as judged by the model developed in this dissertation. From a broader perspective of the latter half of the Syrian EBA, material evidence seems to indicate that agricultural and pastoral production at Tell al-Rawda was socio-politically integrated at the site itself, without evidence of any mobile and, therefore, politically, socially, or culturally independent groups of herders in its surrounding region.

An emerging model of the development of urban society in EBA Syria suggests that the overall expansion of settlement during the middle of the third millennium BC, and the infiltration of sedentary occupation into increasingly marginal landscapes, was made possible through inter-regional political and economic integration:

Because communities in... semi-arid lands cannot be supported by conventional rain-fed staple-based production, we argue that aggrandizing states such as Ebla adopted high risk livestock production in tandem with rain-fed barley production to support a large-scale agro-pastoral economy. This resulted in the extension of settlement into the marginal steppe lands of central Syria, in part to service the needs of livestock management but also to secure the important networks of communication.

Wilkinson et al. 2014: 95

Evidence of aggrandizing states, the concerted control and coordination of productive activities, especially agriculture, and expanding evidence of material and political inequality and its ideological foundations is hinted at in the Ebla texts, which will be discussed in the following chapter. They are also complemented by various aspects of the material record of the third quarter of the third millennium. Although none of this

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<sup>205</sup> Castel and Peltenburg erroneously identify Uraš-maḫ<sup>ki</sup> in relationship to Ibal as “another Syrian power” (2007: 613). In fact, this is simply an alternate proposed reading of the cuneiform and does not constitute a separate polity (Bonechi 2001: 59-60).

<sup>206</sup> See discussion in Chapter 6.



material evidence speaks directly to the nature of the relationship between agricultural and pastoral production in the third quarter of the third millennium, it implies the existence of tightly controlled and coordinated productive activities throughout the Syrian landscape at this time.<sup>207</sup>

For instance, the presence of political authorities and religious institutions attested in the Ebla texts is reflected by the ubiquity of monumental architecture at this time. In the Khabur Triangle<sup>208</sup>, for instance, the Oval of area TC at Tell Brak can be attributed to the EJ 3 with certainty (Quenet 2011: 31). This building contained facilities for the storage of a large amount of grain and its processing into bread. The scale of these facilities, along with over 250 clay sealings found within, suggest that it was a part of a larger institution, possibly connected to it and still unexcavated (Emberling and McDonald 2003: 37-41). At Tell Beydar, excavations have widely encountered EJ 3 levels, especially the latter part of the EJ 3. At this time, it is clear that the site possessed numerous religious and bureaucratic buildings, including not only the central palatial building (Debruyne 2003) and the western building (van Berg and Ammar 2003), dominating the acropolis, but also a palatial building of similar size and scale to the east (Pruß 2011: 113-121). An area of monumental building activity dating to the early part of the EJ 3 period was also detected north of the acropolis, near a gate (Milano and Rova 2003a, 2003b, 2014). The 'B1 building' (Van der Stede and Devillers 2011: 15-22; Van der Stede and Devillers 2014: 11-31), and adjacent U-shaped building (Sténuit and Van

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<sup>207</sup> In this respect, the texts recovered from Tell Beydar are also especially significant sources of information, though they are not without ambiguity. They will be treated in detail in the beginning of the following chapter.

<sup>208</sup> On the basis of his stratigraphic study, Quenet has preferred to treat periods IIa and IIb at Tell Leilan together as broadly equating to the EJ 3 and 4 periods, without discriminating between them (2011: 36). They will be treated together in the following section.

der Stede 2003: 225-229; Van der Stede 2007: 7-10), both with apparent administrative functions, sat just north of the acropolis terrace. Another building, seemingly a large granary, was found on the eastern side of the site (Sténuit 2003). Other than temple A (Bretschneider 2003), located just south of the palace on the acropolis, four other temples have been identified to the south and southwest (Suleiman 2003; Debruyne and Jans 2007; Suleiman 2014).<sup>209</sup>

Similar developments are evident in the Euphrates River Valley. At Jerablus Tahtani, the construction of the so-called ‘fort’—a circumvallated space that dominated the area of the site and seems to have been divided into a number of different specialized areas, containing evidence of domestic and artisanal spaces—is dated to the EME 4 period (Peltenburg 1999; Finkbeiner 2015: 32, 40, pl. 2). It replaced an earlier EME 3 open village plan (Peltenburg et al. 2000: 59). At Tell Ahmar, excavations have identified the corner of a monumental building that may be an *antentempel* (Roobaert and Bunnens 1999: 166). Similarly, a possible *antentempel* dating to some time within the EME 3 period was identified at Qara Qozaq (Olávarri Goicoechea and Valdés Pereiro 2001: 27; Finkbeiner 2015: 22-23, fig. 3). At Tell Banat, the monumental Building 7 dates to Banat phase 4, thus the EME 3 period. In the following phase 3 (EME 4), it was succeeded by Building 6 (Porter and McClellan 1998: 13).<sup>210</sup> This period also bears witness to the remains of Building 1, at nearby Tell Kabir, an *antentempel*, which magnetometric survey suggested could be part of a larger complex of unexcavated buildings (Porter 2000: 332-333). At Tell es-Sweyhat, the possible remains of a

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<sup>209</sup> All of these buildings that were not succeeded by later occupation phases of the EJ 3 period appear to have been abandoned at some time before the end of the EJ 3 / beginning of the EJ 4 period.

<sup>210</sup> Unfortunately, neither of these structures could be completely excavated, as they lay beneath the foundations of contemporary structures.

monumental building were identified in Operation 5. The partially excavated remains of this structure consisted of a wide wall, internally buttressed, with fallen wall paintings (Holland 2006: 382 and pls. 130-131).<sup>211</sup> At Tell el-‘Abd, excavations indicate that at least by the EME 3 period, if not sooner (Finkbeiner 2015: 35), this settlement was surrounded by a wall (Finkbeiner 1994: 117; Finkbeiner 1995: 56) and possibly contained at least one monumental structure (Finkbeiner 1995: 58-59). Similarly, at Tell Munbaqa, just 2 km downstream from el-‘Abd, excavations uncovered an EBA settlement of only about 1.5 ha area surrounded by a large mud brick wall by the EME 3 period (Werner 1998: 38; Finkbeiner 2015: 35). At Tell Halawa, settlement shifted at some point during the EME 3 from mound B to mound A (Orthmann 1989: 50, Porter 2007c: 11). At the latter site, excavators found evidence of site-ringing fortifications (Orthmann 1989: 37) and an *antentempel* (Orthmann 1989: 65-66) from the earliest levels. Further downstream, beyond the Tabqa/Tishreen area, the construction of Palace B at Tell Bi’a dates to the early EME 4 period (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000: 41; Finkbeiner 2015: 26). At Terqa, the city wall was rebuilt in approximately the EME 3 period (Buccellati 1979: 76). At Mari, this period is roughly contemporary with Ville II, a period of time which saw the existence of a large palace and temple sectors containing the so-called ‘Massif Rouge’, temples of Ninhursag, Shamash, and others (Margueron 2004). Turning west of the Jezireh, archaeological knowledge of Ebla at this time is dominated by monumental structures, including not only the excavated portions of Palace G, with its abundant cuneiform archives, but also the nearby Red Temple and the so-

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<sup>211</sup> Holland dates this level to his Phase G, thus it might be contemporary with the latter part of the EME 2, any portion of EME 3, or even the early part of the EME 4 period.

called “Temple of the Rock”, thought by its excavator to be the temple of the deity Kura, of central significance to Eblaite royal ideology (Matthiae 2013a: 39).

The development of sociopolitical complexity and inequality is also suggested in mortuary remains from this period. Although this had been hinted at before the middle of the third millennium, it is at this time that such indications became ubiquitous. To some extent this must be a result simply of increasingly-attested middle and later third millennium contexts, a fact which is perhaps clearest in the Euphrates River Valley. Although tombs there are largely disturbed, there is nonetheless evidence of material inequality, and thus, likely some degree of social competition through mortuary display. The remains of monumental tombs, though, are well attested and indicate not only a greater degree of investment in this competition, but a somewhat different message altogether—appeal to an ideology of political inequality, i.e. hierarchy. For instance, at Jerablus Tahtani the monumental tomb 302 was found to contain objects dating to Porter's phase 4 (Porter 2007c: 11) (EME 4), but was probably constructed in the preceding phase 3 (Peltenburg et al. 1995) (EME 3). The so-called “Hypogeum” of Tell Ahmar, a stone-built chamber tomb that was partially above-ground when originally built, dates probably to the early half of the EME 4 period. It has been shown to be part of a larger building complex, still incompletely recovered (Roobaert and Bunnens 1999: 164-165).

Remains excavated in the area of Tell Banat, discussed above, are perhaps the most striking monumental EBA funerary remains to have been found in the entire Euphrates Valley. In addition to burials north of Tell Banat North and north, east, west of, and within, the 25 ha main site, in the cliffs outside the valley, and at the foot of Jebel Bazi

(McClellan and Porter 1999: 108; Porter 2000: 313) the EME 3 period also probably witnessed the initial construction of the “White Monument”, the use of which continued into the EME 4 (Porter 2000: 320). In addition to this incredible feature, the extraordinary Tomb 7 was found associated with Buildings 6 and 7. Elsewhere in the Tabqa zone, one tomb in particular from Tell Hadidi deserves mentioning in the context of monumental mortuary structures. This apparently below-ground tomb consisted of stairs leading down into a chamber with a total length of between 14 and 15 m. The walls of this tomb were corbelled inwardly and its roof was composed of flat stone slabs (Dornemann 1977: 118; Dornemann 1980: 226-227). A nearby tomb at the site, L1, has also been compared to the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar in its construction and appearance (Dornemann 1977: 118; Dornemann 1980: 227). Palace B at Tell Bi’a, ancient Tuttul, was preceded in the EME 3 period by a set of six above-ground tombs belonging to high-status individuals (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000: 9). At Terqa, excavations of later EME 3 levels (Finkbeiner 2015: 27) identified elite tombs that included equids (Rouault 2014: 239). Two exceptional graves were built using corbelled arches composed of large stone slabs (Rouault 2014: 251-254). West of the Jezireh, a mortuary complex was founded at the center of Umm el-Marra approximately around the mid point of the third millennium, and thus contemporary with the early part of the EJ 3 period, and the very late EME 3 or early EME 4 period (Schwartz 2013: 495). From its earliest phases, it included both semi-freestanding stone and brick built tombs with the remains of elite individuals, as well as funerary installations containing the remains of equids (Schwartz 2013: 498). Its evolution and use would continue for approximately three centuries, continuing beyond the destruction of Ebla’s Palace G. Hypogeum G4, found beneath the

floors of Palace G at Ebla, although empty, appears to have been intended as a subterranean burial place for elite individuals and was constructed during the third quarter of the third millennium (Matthiae 1997).

Evidence for the large scale of agricultural and pastoral production activities indicated in the Ebla texts, the intensification of that production during the EBA, and the centralized organization of those activities, comes from observations of so-called 'off-site' archaeology in the form of both the sherd scatter and 'hollow ways' phenomena. Wilkinson has argued that the former phenomenon, extensive scatters of sherds around EBA sites, indicate the application of rich, organic settlement refuse to agricultural fields, likely in response to the violation of fallow, related to the intensification of agricultural production (1989). Extensification of these same activities is indicated by the so-called 'hollow ways', dark lines visible on aerial and satellite photos that radiate out from ancient settlements. It is likely that these tracks were incised onto the landscape by the continued effect of animal and human traffic along defined routes, constrained by the presence of agricultural fields (van Liere and Lauffray 1954; Wilkinson 1993; Ur 2003). The strong association of both phenomena with EBA tells suggests that this was a period of widespread maximization of agricultural production activities. Coupled with the observation that the largest sites did not contain adequate agricultural resources in their immediate catchments to support their populations, there is further evidence of the sort of regional integration and the development of hierarchical territorial political units evidenced in the Ebla texts (Wilkinson 1994, 1997).

This model also has implications for the practice of pastoralism. As agricultural extensification came to characterize the Syrian landscape, an increasing amount of

territory would be off-limits to free-range herding. Pastoral activities within an agriculturally extensive settlement system would need to be appropriately scaled and managed to coordinate with the agricultural cycle. At the same time, settlements located near to ‘empty’ steppe zones would have been strategically positioned to capitalize on the pasturage potential of those locations, making them potentially significant economic centers. The archives from Tell Beydar, located on the western edge of the Khabur Triangle, though dating to a slightly later period of the EBA, may indicate the presence of such a situation there. The ‘artificial’ creation of one such zone between the sites of Tell al-Hawa, Iraq and Tell Hamoukar, in the Syrian eastern Khabur, may have been detected by survey (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 57). Wilkinson has hypothesized that physical distancing between populations of agricultural and pastoral producers could have led to ‘alienation’ between these groups (Wilkinson 2009: 157). Wossink, on the other hand, has stressed potential benefits following from the economic integration of both groups (2009). This hypothesis, though, seems to suggest a degree of independence between mobile pastoral units and sedentary agricultural producers that, at least in the middle of the third millennium, seems unsupportable. Pastoral production, at least that which was related to the economic systems of the ‘self-aggrandizing states’ of this period, was at least initially entrenched in the sociopolitical systems of sedentary settlements, even if these became ‘detached’ later (e.g. Wilkinson 2009: 157). Contemporary documents from Ebla at this time support the development of such a system of economic integration and agricultural maximization, based both on systems of tribute and trade of agricultural and luxury commodities, and following at least in part from the consolidation of political networks.

## **Abundant Cemeteries of the Euphrates River Valley**

Although the material record gives the impression of highly integrated and coordinated agricultural and pastoral production activities that would seem to counter indicate the presence of segmentary lineage societies, and perhaps even preclude the possibility of habitual mobile pastoralism through extensive agricultural development of the landscape, some researchers have nonetheless identified indirect material evidence of the presence of such groups, or at least their cultural influence. This hypothesis relates to peculiar features of the archaeological landscape that are especially abundant in the Euphrates River Valley—extramural cemeteries. These cemeteries occur seemingly independent of nearby settlements of sufficient size to explain the inferred number of inhumations that they contain. It will be argued here, though, that corresponding sedentary populations are likely to have inhabited sites on parts of the floodplain of the Euphrates River Valley that are now either silted over or eroded away. In another case, concerning the extensive mortuary remains around the cemetery of Abu Hamad, previously thought to be similarly unexplained, recent research centered on the site of Tell Ghanem al-Ali has demonstrated the existence of an EBA sedentary population that can readily explain the size and scope of that cemetery without any necessary reference to mobile pastoral populations.

### *Cemeteries of the Upper Syrian Euphrates*

EBA cemetery sites abound in the portion of the Euphrates River Valley north of the Big Bend region, including the Tishrin salvage zone and the embayment south of Carchemish, but especially in the Tabqa salvage zone. The apparent late LC or early



EBA cairns suspected from magnetometric survey results in the area of Tell Banat might be provisionally counted among these EBA mortuary monuments. While it has been suggested that such these remains result from the presence of mobile pastoral groups (e.g. Roobaert and Bunnens 1999: 165), this claim is purely speculative and lacks corroborating material evidence. In fact, there is more reason to believe that the preponderance of extramural cemeteries is related to the loss of contemporary associated valley floor settlements. One shortcoming of any consideration of settlement dynamics in the Euphrates River Valley for any period of history is the potential incompleteness of the archaeological record at the level of the floodplain itself. Wilkinson has highlighted the significance of this issue very clearly. In his response to Boerma's assertion that the valley floor was uninhabitable before Roman times (2001: 219), Wilkinson has presented a number of forceful counter-observations. Among these are the existence of pre-Roman settlements at Tell Jouweif, located on an eastern channel of the Euphrates just southwest of the midpoint of a line drawn between Tell Hadidi and Tell es-Sweyhat, Tell Kebir in the Tishrin zone, and Tell Jerablus Tahtani just south of Carchemish. Additionally, he cited the work of Geyer and Besançon (1996), who "demonstrate that sites of PPNB, Halaf, Ubaid, and Uruk date do occur on the remains of the ancient Holocene terrace" (2004: 34). Wilkinson also cited both his own firsthand observation of site erosion and Akkermans' (1999) observations "that a number of prehistoric sites do lie buried beneath alluvium of colluvial material washed from slopes and side wadis at various points along the Syrian Euphrates River" (2004: 34). Thus, contra Boerma, the only speculation as regards the settlement of the valley floor is not whether it existed or not, but rather the

nature and extent of such settlement.<sup>212</sup> Despite difficulties in settling and procuring subsistence on the floodplain, there would have been at least two different pressures encouraging human activity there. First, as has been noted, the decreasing rainfall amounts and reliabilities as one moves south, down the isohyet gradient, would have necessitated the use of these resources to the extent they were available. In this vein, Wilkinson has noted Emar texts that sometimes contain references to fields bordering the river (Arnaud 1986, text no. 3 *apud* Wilkinson 2004: 38). Second, as the valley floor widened downstream, more of it would have been unavailable or unreachable for long-term resource extraction based on settlements located in the terraces above the floodplain. This would have presumably been influenced, also, by the location of river channels in the floodplain to the extent that they posed significant burdens to the transportation of people, animals, and goods necessary for life and work there. Given the width of the floodplain in the area of Tell es-Sweyhat and Tell Hadidi, generally no more than 3 km, and the relationship between the length of hollow ways and the maximal extent of agricultural fields, an approximately 3-4 km radius (Chisholm 1962), much of the floodplain between these two sites would have been easily accessible from settlements located on the terraces above the floodplain. The location of Tell Jouweif, approximately midway between these two settlements, would be expected as a prime location for settlement (see fig. 8.1). As one travels downstream from this embayment, the floodplain at the bottom of the valley widens considerably, to distances of up to ten kilometers, and the amount and reliability of rainfall decreases as well. In these situations, one would expect at least seasonal and probably even multi-annual settlements in some parts of the

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<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, as Wilkinson conceded, there would have been significant challenges to settlement of the floodplain, including groundwater salinity and inconvenient spring floods (2004: 40).

floodplain. EBA sites that might have anchored such floodplain settlement systems are Selenkahiye, Emar, and Tell Halawa. Unfortunately, the size and extent of these hypothetical floodplain settlements remains unknown and, seemingly, unknowable. The presence of Tell Jouweif on a relict portion of the floodplain, however, and the fact that populations need not have been nucleated unless ideal micro-environmental and micro-topographical conditions favored it suggests the possibility that populations might have been dispersed, taking the form of small farmsteads such as Tell Hajji Ibrahim. If so, the archaeological signature of such activity—already muted by the erosional and depositional effects of the Euphrates—would have been even weaker.

*The case of the cemetery at Abu Hamad*

The cemetery of Abu Hamad is located on the northern side of the Jebel Bishri, just above the Euphrates River Valley. Meyer described it as being unique in its apparent independence from nearby sites of sedentary occupation, as well as its size. Of the three hundred burials observed, among several thousands that were assumed to be present, only twenty have been excavated (Meyer 2010b: 156). Meyer has compared the structured nature of burial groups at necropolis Z at Abu Hamad with Bösze's analysis of family units in cemetery U at Tell Bi'a (2009: 160). Citing Falb's ceramic assessment of the excavated material, which places the dates of its use between the EB III and early EB IVA (and thus approximately contemporary with the EJ 2 and early EJ 3 periods), Meyer offered the following interpretation:

In north Syria, this is the period of urbanization and formation of the first states. This process was certainly accompanied by a change in society leading from segmentally ordered tribal groups with agnate relationships, that were exclusively defined via the males, towards a state system controlled by a central power and

with cognate relationships derived from the consanguinity of all ancestors. For a certain time span, the original tribal organization of tribe - subtribe - village - lineages (clans) - households remains intact. Every one of those segments brings forth leaders, persons who enjoy status and particular power and who continue to evoke particular relations even after death (ancestor worship).

Meyer 2010a: 161

While such a reconstruction follows the emerging model of EBA society in broad strokes, and does not specifically contradict the understanding of segmentary lineage systems that has been developed in this study, it is nonetheless speculative. Family groupings, if indeed these are represented at necropolis Z at Abu Hamad, are not necessarily unique to mobile pastoral societies. Meyer's interpretation is based on the indirect evidence that inferred geographical segmentation at necropolis Z corresponds to a segmentary social structure, which indicates 'tribalism'. The observation that no nearby settlement exists to account for the presence, let alone the size, of the cemetery with its thousands of inhumations that apparently accumulated in the course of some 5-6 generations (2010a: 162), can be cited as further indirect supporting evidence.

At least some of the facts supporting a mobile pastoral, 'tribal' interpretation, though, are wrong. Recent excavations in the area, at the site of Tell Ghanem al-Ali, which lies "right below the cemetery of Abu Hamad" (Meyer 2010b: 162) provides evidence of a nearby site of sedentary occupation that seems to have been occupied throughout the EBA (Nakamura 2010). As a part of an intensive Japanese survey of the region around Tell Ghanem al-Ali, Nishiaki has shown that settlement mounds and cemeteries in the region are generally paired, suggesting these cemeteries contain the inhabitants of the corresponding villages (2010). Furthermore, Kume and Sultan have recently demonstrated that sedentary occupation of the site of Tell Ghanem al-Ali, over the course of 5-6 generations, is entirely consistent with the number of inhumations

represented at Abu Hamad (2014). The observations that Abu Hamad stands out as especially large and especially distant from a center of sedentary occupation, then, are contradicted in fact. Kume and Sultan's research suggests "that there were no 'real nomads' as candidate for the deceased of massive contemporary cemeteries in the region" (2014: 137).

Kume and Sultan have speculated that cemeteries such as Abu Hamad were built into the steppe zones outside of settlements along this stretch of the Euphrates because of the increasing importance of steppe resources as the EBA progressed, a process which they actually describe as being one of simultaneous urbanization and nomadization (2014: 145). It is not necessary, however, to assume a process of nomadization ongoing through the EBA to explain these forms. Naturally, cemeteries would be located away from the river valley, where they would be prone to either silting over, washing away, or competing with productive agro-pastoral real estate. If these cemeteries were to expand to many times the size of the living population, in what other direction could they expand than further towards the steppe? Of course, if declining climatic conditions led to greater and more intensive exploitation of the steppe zone, the presence of mortuary contexts and monuments might have served as a sociopolitical role governing access to that space, or structuring the interactions that may have taken place there.

### **Disintegration and Renewed Regionalization in the late EBA**

The end of the EBA in Syria is characterized by the disintegration of centrally coordinated systems of specialized agro-pastoral production, and presumably the dissolution of many multi-sited polities and their bureaucracies and organizational and

administrative power. Different researchers have stressed the relative significance of climatic or political factors in this process, as discussed in the previous chapter. The primary concern here, though, is to explore the nature of this shift and its implications for the nature of the integration of agricultural and pastoral productive activities and the structural implications of that integration. New material and political realities correlating with the collapse of highly organized socioeconomic systems in Syria in the latter centuries of the EBA could potentially have changed the relationship between sedentary, agricultural producers and pastoral producers, inasmuch as these two activities were carried out by different populations. This could have led to changing patterns of human use of the landscape that could be reflected in the archaeological record. For instance, it is easy to hypothesize that groups of sedentary agricultural and mobile pastoral producers, physically separated, but politically united by regional political powers, could have become entirely independent polities following the collapse of those administrative systems. The abandonment of extensive areas of cultivation, especially in ecologically more favorable areas, would also have the potential to attract populations pursuing a multi-resource, mobile pastoral subsistence strategy. To the extent that populations were already divided between habitually mobile and sedentary groups, one might expect that shift to happen rapidly. This is because the sociopolitical structures that would guide that subsistence behavior would already be in existence. If, however, those populations were not so differentiated, one might expect that this situation would take a relatively longer period of time to develop as the attraction of open landscapes would be mitigated by some degree of structural momentum relating to the previous sedentary agro-pastoralism that characterized the rest of the EBA. The exact pattern of human use of the landscape,

and the extent to which it either changed or stayed the same, will, however, be dependent on structural and sociopolitical contingencies that are difficult to anticipate. In either case, though, a certain degree of structural change would be expected to correlate with a shift in relationship between these two groups. Periods of economic and political collapse have the potential to generate a high degree of structural friction, in the Giddensian sense discussed in Chapter 3, which could precipitate relatively rapid structural changes. Despite accumulating evidence for destruction and abandonment events at this time, though, continuity and even growth in some settlement systems suggests that, at least in these places, the EBA pattern of centrally-organized agro-pastoral specialized production continued until, and perhaps through, the end of the EBA. This implies that Syrian society, even up to the end of the EBA, was characterized by sedentary, agro-pastoral systems of production.

The majority of destruction and abandonment events in Syria date to the second half of the third millennium. In the region characterized by the EJ dating system, a concentration of such disruptions to sedentary life seem to occur near the end of the EJ 3 period. The beginning of EJ 4 corresponds roughly to the period of apparent Akkadian infiltration and ostensible consolidation of control of much the Khabur Triangle and Mari. The violent transition in the EJ region, from EJ 3 to 4, seems to be reflected to the west of the Jezireh by roughly contemporaneous destruction events taking place in the middle of the EME 4 period in the Euphrates Valley and the destruction of Ebla's palace G. That event, which marks the transition from Mardikh Iib1 to Iib2 has also usually served to mark the division between the EB IVA and IVB periods. Despite the earlier influence of self-aggrandizing statements from Sargon and Naram-Sin, it does not seem

that all or even most of these destructive events should be attributed to Akkadian military actions. Rather, it seems that Akkadian military infiltration of this region may have, instead, been made possible by a political vacuum resulting from the destruction of these polities. Recent chronological analyses of the corpus of cuneiform documents from Ebla, as discussed in the following chapter, seem to show an intensification of military actions between Syrian polities by the end of the Mardikh IIb1 period (Biga 2003, 2008).

Evidence of continuity, despite or without concomitant destruction events, characterizes much of the latter part of the EBA as well. For instance, continuity of regional settlement systems, with some variability in satellite settlements, characterizes Tell al-Hawa in the transition to the early part of the MBA (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995). Similarly, continuity characterizes the transition from a period of Akkadian control to post-Akkadian phases of the EBA at Tell Brak (Oates and Oates 2001b: 393-393). Thus, despite evidence of the contraction of sedentary settlement and the collapse of inter-regional economic and political integration at this time, there is some evidence that the social institutions which presided over the urban, cosmopolitan period of the EJ 3 persisted to some degree and in some form throughout the EBA and, in places, into the MBA. This is especially the case at the site of Tell es-Sweyhat, which underwent a significant expansion in site size at the end of the third millennium, correlating with an intensive agro-pastoral subsistence strategy, continuing the pattern of urbanization and agro-pastoral specialization that began just before the middle of the millennium.

Once again, the lack of chronological resolution in survey data makes it difficult to identify demographic changes relevant to the very end of the EBA, but in these cases a comparison to the early Middle Bronze Age (MBA) results might be indicative of such



changes. Around Tell Hamoukar, there is direct evidence of reduction beginning at least with the beginning of the MBA, if not also in the immediately post-Akkadian phase of settlement (i.e. EJ 5) there (Ur 2010b: 109). Around Tell Leilan, Ristvet reported a decrease in size in larger sites corresponding to approximately the EJ 4, while in EJ 5 there was new settlement along the Wadi Radd (*apud* Wossink 2009: 96). The excavators of Tell Leilan initially associated the decline of surrounding sites in the Leilan I Ib period, roughly contemporary to the EJ 4, with an Akkadian imperial policy of control that included also circumvallation of the city and a new program of agricultural intensification (Weiss et al. 1993). The end of Leilan period I Ib came abruptly, apparently, as evidenced by an incompletely constructed administrative building on the acropolis, which was abandoned after a brief post-Akkadian phase of occupation in period I Ic (EJ 5). By that time, also, the lower town seems to have been abandoned and Tell Leilan ceased to function as a regional capital hosting an urban population (Ristvet, Guilderson, and Weiss 2004). At Tell Brak, the end of Phase L—thought to correlate largely with EJ 3—shows traces of burning throughout the site (Oates and Oates 2001b: 382), for instance at the ‘Oval’ of area TC (Emberling and McDonald 2003: 37-41). Akkadian imperial presence at Tell Brak followed, in Phase M, the EJ 4 period. Excavations of this phase have revealed evidence of a reconstruction of much of the upper part of the mound, possibly to be attributed to a phase of Akkadian imperial control (Oates and Oates 2001b: 391-392) and the construction of the so-called Naram-Sin Palace—likely a grain-store—the bricks of which were rather conveniently stamped with the name of Naram-Sin (Mallowan 1947). The transition from phase M to N (roughly EJ 5) also shows some evidence of violence (Oates and Oates 2001a: 36-37), and a

reorganization of space on the high mound (Oates and Oates 2001b: 392), but there appears to be a significant continuity of occupation at the site in the post-Akkadian phase (Oates and Oates 2001b: 392-393). On the western edge of the Khabur Triangle, Tell Beydar witnessed a reorganization of its high mound following a period of abandonment at the end of the EJ 3 (Lebeau 2003: 26). In EJ 4, the palace was sealed by the construction of a mud brick terrace, while Temple A was replaced by two successive cultic places, the so-called “Upper Temple” and then the “Square Temple” (Bretschneider et al. 2003). No EJ 5 materials have been recovered from the site and so, ostensibly, it was abandoned by that time.

Downstream, in the salvage area along the Khabur River south of Hasseke, most EBA sites of the earlier third millennium show no evidence of occupation past the EJ 3 period, notably Tells al-Raqa’i (Schwartz 2015a), Kneidig (Klengel-Brandt et al. 2005: 15), Melebiya (Lebeau 1993), Atij (Fortin 1989), Gueda (Fortin 1995: 44-53; Fortin 2002-2003: 113-116), and possibly Bderi (Pfälzner 1990). Ziyadeh seems to have been abandoned already in the latter part of the EJ 2 period (Hole and Arzt 1998). The latest layer at Tell Kerma can perhaps be attributed to the EJ 3 period, consisting of burned granaries and a silo (Saghieh 1991: 171-173). Two exceptions to this pattern are Tells Rad Shaqrah and Bderi. At the former site, domestic architecture dating into the EJ 4 period might be indicated (Kolinski 1996), but there is seemingly no evidence of EJ 5, while at the latter, there is a destruction layer separating the latest EJ 3 remains from the latest third millennium remains, belonging to the EJ 4 period, which consisted of simple domestic architecture (Pfälzner 1990: 68). The Middle Khabur region, then, seems to

have been severely depopulated by the end of the EJ 3, and completely depopulated by the end of the EJ 4.

Kouchoukos has advanced the argument that the latter phase of occupation attested in the survey around the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz represented occupation that persisted into and, perhaps, beyond the period of Akkadian imperial interest in the region, thus at least through the EJ 4 period. If so, it would indicate a trend that contradicts that observed in more arid zones of Syria at this time. Kouchoukos’ argument is not, however, based on any archaeological facts, as no sites of this survey have ever been excavated and the ceramic sequence used to classify the sites cannot be compared to any neighboring region.<sup>213</sup> Along the wadi Hammar, EJ 4 contexts are evident only at Tell Chuera, Kharab Sayyar, and possibly Dahlis. At Tell Chuera, period ID remains seem to bridge the transition between the EJ 3 and EJ 4 periods, being interrupted by a site-wide destruction event early in the EJ 4 period, an event which serves as the boundary between

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<sup>213</sup> His argument, instead, is based on the observation of Akkadian imperial influence and the persistence of settlement at this time at Tell Chuera (though much reduced, as discussed below), and an inscription of Naram-Sin, referring to Mt. Dibar, which Stol (1979: 25-26) has identified with the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz (Kouchoukos 1999: 373). The assumption that Akkadian period occupation at Tell Chuera indicates occupation at any site in the vicinity of the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz is, of course, purely speculative. The collapse of settlement to the east, along the Middle Khabur, is just as relevant of an indicator. The issue of Mt. Dibar, and its association with the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz is less speculative. Stol came to this conclusion on the basis that such a mountain is named on two other occasions, once in the *Lipšur* litanies where the mountains *di-bar* and *da-bar*, presumably the same, are both called ‘mountains of terebinth’, KUR GIŠ.LAM.GAL, and the lexical list *Harra* = *hubullu*, which lists three mountains of terebinth (KUR *bu-tu-ut-tum*): *ga-sar*, *di-bar*, and *en5-gi-šag*. On the observation that the presence of terebinths characterizes the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz, and that Dibar appears as a theophoric element in names from Gasur and the Diyala region, and the proximity of the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz to these regions, Stol argued for such an identification (1979: 30). The toponym *ĪAR-ša-ma-at* in the inscription, though, is otherwise unknown. If it is possible to understand the well-known toponym Uršum from this writing, this could be understood to place mount Dibar in its vicinity, most likely in Anatolia, west of Bireçik (see discussion in the following chapter). Such a location had been a consensus regarding Mt. Dibar before Stol (Rowton 1967: 271; Lewy 1950-51: 357-386; Hrozný 1929: 75). It possible, though, that in this inscription Naram-Sin meant to reference two geographically separate places to emphasize the range of Akkadian military influence. On the point of using this as evidence of Akkadian period occupation at Mt. Dibar, one may note that Naram-Sin is not recorded as having fought any battles or encountering any people in the area of Mt. Dibar, but rather a wild bull. Thus, his inscription may also have been intended to communicate an absence of sedentary centers in that region.

Chuera ID and IE. Following this event, early in the EJ 4 period, Palace F was repurposed and replaced by smaller free-standing buildings, perhaps workshops (Orthmann and Pruß 1995: 125). Evidence of occupation at the site during period IE is confined to Palace F and area B on the high mound, and area T in the lower town (Meyer 2010a: 14). These occupations do not seem to have persisted into EJ 5, though, and excavations at Tell Chuera do not record any further occupation until the Late Bronze Age (LBA). EJ 4 period remains were only sparsely encountered at Tell Kharab Sayyar, being limited to a few domestic and, perhaps, industrial features (Hempelmann 2013: 22). Survey of the Balikh drainage area, as mentioned already, divided the EBA only into two periods, noting a decline in settlement in the latter period, especially in the northern part of the region (Curvers 1990: 200). Though Curvers was unable to establish the existence or length of a gap in sedentary occupation of the region, he did note an increase in regional settlement in the early second millennium (1990: 201).

Moving to the Euphrates, exact chronological correlation of archaeological contexts, especially to other regions, is again difficult. In rough terms, though, the period of Akkadian infiltration and sedentary disruption in the Khabur Triangle that began with the EJ 4 period correlates to the second half of the EME 4 period, and continues into the early EME 5. In the embayment south of Carchemish, occupation of the Jerablus Tahtani Phase 2B fortress is attested as having persisted into Porter's phase 4, and thus EME 4, on the basis of ceramics found in the monumental tomb 302 (Porter 2007c: 11).

Following phase 2B, though, excavations did not expose any further occupation until the Iron Age (IA) (Peltenburg et al. 2000: 55). At Tell Shiyukh Tahtani, a small cemetery at the eastern foot of the tell and a single wall were initially attributed to the latter half of

the EBA on the basis of associated ceramics (Falsone 1998: 30-33). The appearance of Hama J type goblets there indicates the continued use of that site into at least the EME 4 period (Falsone 1998: fig. 6), and likely the EME 5 (Finkbeiner 2015: 21). On the right bank of the Euphrates, in the embayment south of Carchemish, excavations at Tell al-Amarna revealed parts of a monumental foundation “qui a été victims d’un incendie brutal” and slightly later domestic contexts, also with traces of fire, preliminarily dated to the EB IVA and EB IVB, respectively (Tunca 1999: 30-31), and thus contemporary to the EME 4 period or later. Subsequent analysis of excavated ceramic forms at that site indicate that the aforementioned destruction event should be dated to sometime near the very end of the EME 4 or the beginning of the EME 5, and that occupation of the site was nevertheless uninterrupted, ceramically speaking, from that time into the early part of the MBA (Pons 2001). Also, at Tell Ahmar, occupation may have continued, as Bunnens has argued that levels previously interpreted as ‘Aramaeon’ may in fact represent a later EBA or MBA phase of occupation at the site (1990: 16-17). At Qara Qozaq, where settlement layers including two phases of *antentempel* that can be dated at least the EME 4 period on the basis of ceramic remains, it appears likely that settlement continued through the MBA (Valdés Pereiro 1999: 118-119).

Further south, in the embayment hosting Tell Banat, Banat Period III is equivalent to the EME 4. Beginning at some point in this span of time, excavations suggest that Tell Banat and its environs were largely abandoned (Porter 2007c: 12). Subsequent occupation, however, is attested at Tell Kabir in the form of storage pits dating to Banat Period II (EME 5), dug into the earlier *antentempel* there, and a subsequent phase of domestic architecture attributed to Banat Period I (EME 6) (Porter 1995; 2007: 21).

Excavations on top of the adjacent Tell Bazi in 2004 recovered evidence of EBA occupation there for the first time in the form of a gate complex with three phases, the second of which “was thoroughly destroyed by a military event...” and the last phase of which “can probably be dated to the late Akkadian period” (Otto 2006: 11, 13). In terms of such a timeline, then, there is evidence of a destruction event that could be contemporary with abandonment of Tell Banat and the reconfiguration of the use of space at Tell Kabir.

Although this period is characterized by a significant expansion in settled area and monumental construction efforts at Tell es-Sweyhat, which will be discussed below, some sites along the valley just south of its embayment show evidence of a hiatus at this point. Among these are Tell al-‘Abd, where more recent excavations indicate a destruction level probably dating to the end of the EME 3 period (Finkbeiner 1995: 59-60; Finkbeiner 2015: 40, pl. 2). In contrast, Bounni, excavating in 1971-72, attributed three phases to his level 2 at the site, spanning from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century BC (1979: 50). The scant pottery published from this level, though, in photograph, appears to be attributable only as late as Porter’s Euphrates phase 4, and thus EME 4, on stylistic grounds.<sup>214</sup> Further downstream, Tell Halawa (A) phase 3c, dating to the EME 4 period, shows evidence of destruction from fire in different locations throughout the site (Orthmann 1989). Phase 3b there, primarily a re-construction of the earlier Phase 3c, has been associated by its excavators with Mardikh IIB1, thus roughly contemporary with at least the latter half of the EME 4 period, and perhaps part of EME 5 as well (Orthmann and Boessneck 1989: 35; Finkbeiner 2015: 24). A following phase, 3a, is difficult to

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<sup>214</sup> Finkbeiner presently maintains a hiatus at the site between this period and the early second millennium (2015: 35).

define, having been much disrupted by later MBA levels. Nevertheless, destruction seems to characterize the divisions between 3c-b and 3b-a, with the latter period representing a significant reorganization of space at the site (Orthmann and Boessneck 1989: 50). Although contexts at Tell Munbaqa have yet to be the subject of a refined chronological treatment, some amount of domestic architecture and possibly an *antentempel* seems to characterize the end of the EBA there, with evidence of continued occupation of the site in the MBA (Orthmann and Kühne 1974). Just across the valley from Tell Halawa, evidence at Selenkahiye suggests continued occupation and re-occupation despite recurrent destruction events throughout the latter half of the third millennium. On the basis of ceramic typologies, the five EBA phases excavated at that site have been divided into an early and late period, the former being contemporary to Tell Mardikh period IIB1 and the later phase with IIB2 (Schwartz 2001: 253). Thus, early Selenkahiye dates roughly to EME 4 and late Selenkahiye with EME 5. The earlier periods are characterized by apparent settlement of the site followed by the construction of a citadel wall, that phase culminating in the razing of the wall below its foundation and the thorough destruction of Phase 2, at the end of the EME 4 period. Subsequent to that destruction phase was another occupation phase characterized by architectural breaks. A number of domestic contexts were identified at this time with a fortification wall and fortress associated with Akkadian sealings. The following phase showed evidence of another site-wide destruction event in the EME 5, followed by a haphazard reconstruction of the citadel wall and some evidence of domestic re-occupation of the site with architectural breaks from the previous period (Meijer 2001). Thus, Selenkahiye seems to have had a violent existence during the EME 4 and 5 periods, eventually being

abandoned by the end of the EBA. Just a few kilometers downstream, German excavations at Tell Meskene, ancient Emar, have borne witness to occupation of that site at least around the EME 5 period, and possibly earlier (Finkbeiner and Sakal 2003: 70). At Tell Bi'a, later EME 4 contexts followed an episode of destruction witnessed by a conflagration that ended the occupation of Palace B (Strommenger et al. 2000). Of the three phases of the Pfeilergebäude that survived this conflagration, phases 2 and 3 included Akkadian dynastic style sealings (Strommenger et al. 2000: 43-44) and so must date to the latter EME 4 and EME 5 periods. The end of the EBA in the area of Palace B and the Pfeilergebäude was characterized by a shift to a completely different use context that included storage facilities and ovens (Strommenger et al. 2000: 53).

In the vicinity of Jebel Bishri, Japanese excavations at Tell Ghanem al-Ali seem to indicate that occupation at that site had come to an end by the end of the EBA (Nakamura 2010: 119), though surface finds also seemed to indicate MBA activity (Hasegawa 2010: 33). Downstream, at Terqa, possible evidence of a period of abandonment dates to approximately the middle of the EJ 3 period (Rouault 2014: 250). Following this period of possible abandonment, occupation seems to have continued at least during the latter part of the EJ 3 as witnessed by domestic contexts with evidence of craft activities (Rouault and Mora 2009: 657), as well as the presence of two exceptionally rich tombs (Rouault 2014: 251-255). At Mari the latter stages of the EBA are characterized by the end of the so-called Ville II in destruction by fire (Margueron 2002: 308), and the foundation of Ville III following a period of abandonment (Margueron 2002: 309). The foundation of Ville III was initially undertaken in the area of the palace and other public



buildings, and involved a complete transformation of some spaces, while evidence of domestic occupation at the site was feeble (Margueron 2002: 309, 338).

Meanwhile, in the Jabbul Plain it is unclear how the aggregate picture of occupation changed from the earlier part of the EBA to the latter part, though it is clear that by the beginning of the MBA there was a significant decrease in occupation, with sites concentrated in wetter areas of the region (Yukich 2013: 198, 202). At Umm el-Marra, the latter half of period V and most of period IV are probably contemporary with the latter half of the EME 4 and about the end of the EBA. In period IV, the mortuary complex founded in late period VI continued in use (Schwartz 2013). As excavated, the complex included ten at least partially above-ground tombs with human interments featuring rich grave goods and ten structures devoted to the burial of equids (Schwartz 2013: 498). The use of this mortuary space continued into period IV before coming to an end, with evidence of some level of disregard or ignorance of earlier tombs and a concomitant ideological shift (Schwartz 2013: 504). After a period of abandonment at Umm el-Marra, lasting at least a century, this mortuary space was completely transformed by the construction of so-called 'Monument 1' (Schwartz et al. 2012).

At Ebla, following the destruction of Palace G at the end of Mardikh phase IIB1, a trapezoidal palace was constructed. The city was destroyed once again the very end of the EBA, around 2000 BC (Matthiae 2006). East of Ebla, between its hinterland and the Jabbul, where the third quarter of the third millennium had seen an increase in settlement density, evidence from survey suggests constriction of sedentary occupation at the end of the EBA. In the Matkh area, de Maigret noted a reduction of sites occupied during the EB IVb, though continuity at some strategically significant centers (1974; 1978: 89-90).

In the vast area surveyed by Geyer et al., occupation at the end of the EBA was extensive and associated with areas of agricultural productivity, and while the later part of the MBA is represented in that area, the beginning of the MBA is entirely lacking, speaking to a depopulation of the region at the end of the EBA (Geyer et al. 2007: 275).

In the latter part of the EBA, corresponding probably with at least the last quarter of the third millennium, at a time when many other sites in Syria suffered destruction or abandonment events, or were often at least reduced in size, and many landscapes were emptying of sedentary occupation, Tell es-Sweyhat expanded to its maximum size of more than 40 ha (Zettler 1997b: 169).<sup>215</sup> At that time, Tell es-Sweyhat also occupied the pinnacle of a settlement hierarchy located in the embayment south of Tishrin (Wilkinson 2004: 138). Excavations on the upper mound of the site have revealed the remains of an inner fortification wall, storerooms (Holland 2006: 56), and a specialized kitchen building dating to around this time (Armstrong and Zettler 1997), and, at the top of the high mound, a single room, destroyed by fire, comparable to other structures in the area that have been interpreted as having a sacred character (Danti and Zettler 2007: 179-180). This seems to indicate the presence of some institutional presence, dominating Tell es-Sweyhat's high mound at this time of maximum expansion. Meanwhile, sherd scatters around the walls of the tell indicate manuring activities and the violation of fallow (Wilkinson 1982). Evidence of the intensive use of its eastern, upland steppe zone for both pasturage and hunting also dates to this period (Danti 2000; Miller 1997a; Weber 1997) and suggests a situation of maximum subsistence intensification. All indications are that Tell es-Sweyhat was operating near the limits of its subsistence capacity at this

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<sup>215</sup> Although continued occupation of Tell es-Sweyhat throughout the EBA seems likely, Porter recognized little evidence there of contexts that can be dated securely to her Euphrates pottery phase 5 (2007: 12), i.e. EME 5.

time. Occupation in the Tell es-Sweyhat embayment continued into the MBA, but in reduced fashion and, eventually, the site and its immediate environs were abandoned early in the second millennium (Wilkinson 2004: 143).

Across the valley, at Tell Hadidi, continuity from the middle of the third millennium through the transition to the second millennium seems to be attested, despite a destruction event placed around 2000 BC by the excavator (Dornemann 1985: 50-51). There is, though, relatively scanty evidence attesting to occupation that can be positively assigned to this timespan (Porter 2007c: 12). Dornemann has proposed that the city reached its maximum extent of 58 ha by the mid to late third millennium (1992), but the exact pattern and timing of this expansion and the possibility of a later contraction is unknown. Wilkinson noted that if both Tells Hadidi and es-Sweyhat occupied their maximum extents simultaneously, their sustaining areas “would overlap, thereby implying that there would have been competition for food and shortages in bad years” (2004: 141). This might also imply the existence of a single political institution, coordinating the activities of both settlements. Wilkinson instead favored the hypothesis of a low settlement density at these sites, close to 100 persons per ha, which would preclude sustaining area overlap (2004: 141). It is tempting though, in light of any contradictory evidence, to suggest that the sudden waxing of Tell es-Sweyhat’s fortunes could have been the result of the waning of Tell Hadidi’s, owing to factors that were primarily political. Both sites, at maximum extent, would have relied on valley floor exploitation (Wilkinson 2004: 141) and it is easy to imagine that a population and/or political decline at Tell Hadidi could have opened up new sustaining areas that allowed for the sudden and dramatic growth of Tell es-Sweyhat’s settlement system in the late

EME 4 or EME 5 periods. Although the valley floor site of Tell Jouweif was never the subject of controlled excavations, it has been the subject of surveys producing mid to late EBA and MBA sherds, suggesting at least a persistence of settlement at this site during that time (Wilkinson 2004: 202).

Thus, the final few centuries of the third millennium, following the destruction of Ebla IIB1, are characterized both by a general decline in the overall amount of sedentary occupation of the Syrian landscape, especially its more arid zones, as well as a decline in the sizes of many sites and settlement systems in particular. The nature and timing of these declines varies somewhat from region to region. The Middle Khabur region was largely depopulated before the end of the EJ 3 period. Occupational decline in the Khabur Triangle, though, seems to have taken place at the end of the EJ 3 and beginning of the EJ 4 periods. Although instability seems to have been widespread, though, it was not contemporaneous. Tell es-Sweyhat saw the floruit of its EBA settlement system only after the flurry of destructive events that characterized the transition from the middle to the latter half of the EME 4 period in the Euphrates Valley, thus reaching its sedentary apogee after a significant contraction of sedentary life in the Khabur Triangle. Overall, though, this period can be defined as one of instability for sedentary occupation sites (Schwartz 2007: 62). This tumultuous period seems to begin with the transition from the EJ 3 to 4 period, roughly the middle of the EME 4 period, around the time of the destruction of Ebla's Palace G.

The extent to which deteriorating climatic conditions effected the timing or severity of these disruptions of sedentary life, both in the aggregate and variably by region, is an ongoing source of debate. In 1993, Weiss et al. argued that ecofactual data drawn from

excavations at Tell Leilan supported the existence of an abrupt phase of aridification there lasting from 2200 to 1900 BC, resulting in the abandonment of Tell Leilan and its hinterland, with a concomitant shift from agricultural to pastoral subsistence strategies. This argument was placed in a broader context of climate change at the time, and related to evidence of contemporary drought events in Egypt and civilizational collapses there, in the Levant, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Indus Valley (Weiss et al. 1993).

Although the details of this model, and the roster of its proponents, have changed (e.g. Courty 2001) since it was initially proposed, in broad outlines the argument remains the same. There have been many detractors of this model, especially relating to the abrupt and extreme nature of the event that Weiss and colleagues espoused (e.g. Zettler 2003; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2001; Oates and Oates 2001b). More recent climatic studies, mentioned in the previous chapter, support the notion that climate change at the end of the third millennium was neither sharp nor abrupt, but characterized rather by a period of gradually increasing aridity, punctuated by oscillating periods of drought and humidity. They stress the idea that civilizational factors were as, if not more, significant in explaining the collapse of sedentary systems than climate change (Kuzucuoğlu 2007: 476). In any event, it is clear that the last few centuries of the third millennium in Syria were characterized by a significant amount of political and social upheaval and, quite possibly, ideological upheaval as well (Schwartz 2007: 59). Relevant to this issue is the late florescence of the Tell es-Sweyhat settlement system, and the perseverance of some settlements, especially in the Euphrates Valley and further west, which indicate that, in these zones at least, the same or similar sociopolitical structures that characterized the initial expansion of EBA urban and highly organized agro-pastorally specialized

societies, persisted until, or near to the end of, the EBA. This does not, however, rule out the possibility that structural adaptations relating to a shift towards mobile pastoralism characterized some populations in Syria at this time. This possibility is rather discounted by a continued lack of material evidence for the presence of mobile populations in the Syrian countryside throughout the EBA, including the very end of that period. The significance of this EBA ‘gap’ is suggested through comparison with the succeeding MBA.

### **The Early Bronze Age ‘Gap’ in the Syrian Steppe**

Table 4.1, in Chapter 4, is a thorough summary of all potentially relevant material correlates of segmentary lineage systems. The more of these features that may be identified, the greater the probability that such systems are indicated. Not all of the features in that table, though, are equally useful discriminating criteria in application to the material record. A significant degree of sedentism, and especially exclusive individual rights of access to territory, of the sort that correlates with intensive agricultural production, was shown in Chapter 3 to be anathema to segmentary lineage structures. Therefore, sociocultural features inferred from sites of sedentary habitation are largely irrelevant to the question of segmentary lineage systems. Perhaps the most significant feature in the identification of such societies, then, is the identification of more ephemeral traces of transhumant occupation—what may be more colloquially referred to as campsites. The presence of such sites, to the extent that they can be retrieved from the archaeological record, constitutes a minimum baseline of evidence for the hypothesized presence of mobile populations.

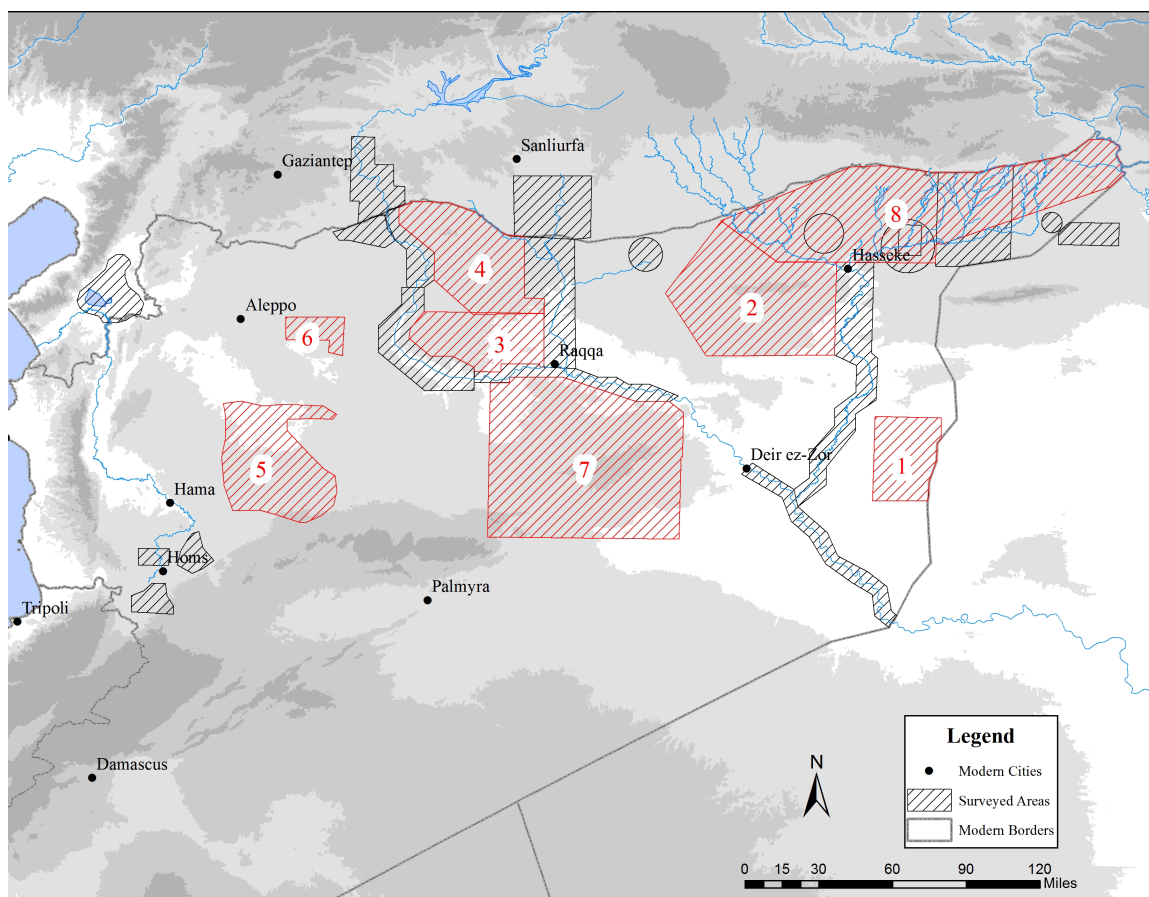
As was pointed out continually in Chapter 4, the physical remains of mobile pastoral encampments have a high potential to go unnoticed in archaeological survey. Such sites are more ephemeral than long-term sedentary occupations by their very nature. Several studies, though, have demonstrated that the remains of such groups are neither invisible nor irretrievable from the archaeological record, despite a potential to be underrepresented (e.g. Juli 1978; Hole 1980; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992; Ur and Hammer 2009). Nevertheless, Ur and Hammer have recently pointed to two reasons why the recognition of such sites is likely to have been artificially reduced in traditional surveys of the greater Mesopotamian area. First, traditional surveys have been oriented towards the identification of tell-sites, which are highly identifiable on the landscape and do not require the same intensive survey necessary to detect low or non-mounded areas of artifact scatters that could correspond to temporary encampments (2009: 38). Second, much survey of this area has been confined to regions in the so-called ‘zone of destruction’, which has been characterized, in both the modern and some pre-modern periods, by extensive and intensive agricultural exploitation. This activity has the potential to both permanently and temporarily obscure the presence of the relatively subtle surface traces of locations of transhumant occupation (ibid). Nevertheless, Ur and Hammer’s own intensive survey aimed at the detection of mobile pastoral campsites was highly successful in identifying such features, specifically in those areas which lay on the margins of cultivation, just outside the ‘zone of destruction’ (2009: 53).

On the macro-regional level, a review of figure 6.2 demonstrates that the Syrian landscape is still largely unexplored as regards steppe zones beyond the limits of agricultural exploitation, where evidence of mobile pastoral communities might be

preserved. Nevertheless, eight regions of research likely to produce observations relevant to the presence or absence of tribal populations in the EBA can be identified. In no particular order these are 1) the survey in the area of the wadi Aḡiḡ, in eastern Syria (Bernbeck 1993), 2) the Yale University Khabur Basin Project survey of the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz (Kouchoukos 1999), 3) the Tell es-Sweyhat regional project’s survey of the upland areas east of the Tell es-Sweyhat embayment (Danti 1997, 2000), 4) the Deutschen Archäologischen Institut’s (DAI) survey of the same Balikh-Euphrates uplands region, up to the Turkish frontier (Einwag 1993), 5) the ‘arid margins of northern Syria’ survey of a large area south of Aleppo (Geyer et al. 2007), 6) the Jabbul Plain Survey (Schwartz et al. 2000; Yukich 2013), 7) a very recent joint Japanese and Syrian survey of the Jebel Bishri region (Ohnuma and al-Maqdissi 2008; Fujii 2010) and, 8) a survey of the western part of the Khabur Triangle (Lyonnet 1996, 2000). Of these eight, two must be immediately set aside because the employed survey methodology was specifically oriented toward the detection of sedentary settlements (Einwag 1993; Schwartz et al. 2000). Of the six that remain, the results of two are incompletely published, and address only (Kouchoukos 1999), or only in detail (Danti 2000), EBA remains. The four remaining surveys do produce results relevant to the question of transhumant activity in the Syrian steppe in the EBA. Their results suggest not only an absence of such evidence for the EBA, but also supply evidence from the MBA which, together, suggests that the absence of evidence in this case is indeed evidence for an absence of mobile pastoral occupation of the drier regions of the EBA Syrian steppes.

The DAI survey of the wadi Aḡiḡ area was carried out in 1983 and 1984. It involved an area east of the Khabur River, abutting the Iraqi border, which included a





**Figure 6.2. Surveyed areas including, and near to, the Syrian Jezireh**

unified hydrological catchment zone stretching 70 km north northeast by south southwest, 20 km wide. The headwaters of this catchment zone stretch 200 km north of the survey region, to the southern slopes of the Jebel Sinjar. Much of the area covered by this survey includes soils of extremely poor agricultural potential, including large areas of salt flats, though there are restricted areas with local characteristics that offer a higher degree of agricultural potential (Bernbeck 1993: 7). The area as a whole, though, is not particularly well-suited to extensive agricultural pursuits and was, at the time of the survey, primarily inhabited by mobile pastoral populations. The survey methodology was itself not particularly oriented to the identification of more ephemeral artifact scatters that might indicate the presence of mobile encampments (1993: 17). Nevertheless, in

part through extensive consultation with local pastoral populations possessing a high degree of familiarity with features of potential archaeological significance in the survey zone, the survey team was able to identify low and flat-surfaced artifact scatters of low density, which they interpreted as likely sites of ancient temporary mobile pastoral encampments (1993: 16). Analysis of surface finds indicated a significant portion of these more ephemeral sites dated to the MBA (1993: 63, 68), as compared to, arguably, a complete dearth<sup>216</sup> of evidence of any EBA human activity whatsoever in the survey area (1993: 61). These results were not without their complications. For instance, the surveyors noted the possibility of confusion between some MBA forms and those of later periods, possibly resulting in the misidentification of some MBA finds as Iron Age (IA), Late Roman period, or Islamic middle age, or vice versa (1993: 62-63). Additionally, they stressed the fact that the identification of low or flat sites with low-density artifact scatters were almost certainly under-represented as a result of their survey methodology (1993: 63). Finally, they stressed their interpretation of these sites as mobile pastoral encampments as preliminary and in need of confirmation by excavation which, unfortunately, was not a research objective for them at the time (1993: 68-69).

A similar EBA gap in human occupation has been identified on the western flanks of the Jebel Bishri. A joint Japanese and Syrian survey of the valley and upland regions surrounding in this area identified evidence of human activity in the western flanks of the Jebel in the form of 35 cairn fields, containing over 398 total individual cairns (Fujii and Adachi 2010: 63). Excavation of a handful of cairns at two of these sites, wadi Hedaja 1 and Tor Rahum, initially suggested to excavators the possibility of both EBA and MBA

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<sup>216</sup> Only two sherds were identified as belonging to the EBA, “und es bleibt abzuwarten, ob diese Scherben nur zufällig frühbronzezeitlichen Material ähnlich sind oder ob sie Reste menschlicher Tätigkeiten aus diesem Zeitraum im Aġiġ-Gebiet sind” (1993: 61).

dates of use, on the basis of artifact typological analysis (Ohnuma and al-Khabour 2009a: 142). More extensive reanalysis, though, complemented by results obtained from radiocarbon samples, has demonstrated that the construction of these cairn fields began only early in the MBA (Fujii and Adachi 2010: 73, fig. 13). Except for the Euphrates River valley and immediately neighboring eastern and northern slopes of the Jebel Bishri, this survey has demonstrated that “the Bishri EBA falls on a chronological hiatus” (Fujii 2014: 83). Although direct information relevant to the subsistence practices of human groups in the drier flanks of the Jebel Bishri was not immediately forthcoming from excavations of cairns, biomechanical analysis of human remains retrieved from cairns at Tor Rahum shows evidence of a pattern of lower limb bone morphology and pathological changes consistent with an interpretation of high mobility (Ohnuma and al-Khabour 2009b: 201; Nakano and Ishida 2010: 107; Fujii and Adachi 2010: 73).

The third survey to produce results relevant to the question of EBA human activity in the ‘zone of preservation’ was carried out by a joint French and Syrian team and focused on a region south of Aleppo and east of Hama, comprising an area of nearly 7000 km<sup>2</sup>, which resulted in the identification of more than one thousand sites of archaeological significance (Geyer et al. 2007: 269-270). This survey was motivated by a desire to catalog changing human use of a landscape on the arid margins of the Fertile Crescent, including a broad swath of territory surrounding the ‘zone of uncertainty’. Although the complete results and details of the methodology of the survey have yet to be published in detail, a preliminary summary of the results relate evidence of extensive sedentary occupation of marginal landscapes in the EBA, corresponding in their location to micro-ecological zones well-suited to the practice of agriculture (2007: 277-278).

Following the maximal extent of these systems into the drier interior of the Syrian steppes in the latter part of the EBA, the early part of the MBA witnessed a severe reduction in sedentary occupation, and its retreat to more well-watered areas in the western part of the survey region (2007: 277). A curious feature of continued MBA human activity in the drier, eastern part of the survey area noted by the surveyors are five citadels, “each having a perimeter of several hundred metres... distributed from north to south in the region under study” (2007: 279). These sites were associated almost exclusively with MBA pottery, “Early Bronze pottery being more rare, even non-existent” (ibid). These apparently defensive citadels, or fortresses, were constructed on points high enough to enable line-of-sight communication and constitute a unified defensive system “leading us to think that they were built as part of a general defence project for the agricultural zones situated to the west of the region studied, but with maintenance of close ties to pastoral zones of the east” (2007: 280).

A unique architectural feature identified by this survey may also relate to a defensive purpose, or possibly a material manifestation of an ideological division of space between ‘the desert and the sown’. The “Très Long Mur” was found on the inferred edge of EBA cultivation, east of Qatna and, seemingly for that reason, its surveyors have attributed its construction to that period. This wall maintains an approximate width of 1 m for a stretch of more than 200 km, ending in its northern arm at a fortress (Geyer et al 2007: 278). Geyer and colleagues sought to explain the purpose of the wall thusly:

The frontier would possibly have separated two worlds, that of the farmers and that of the nomadic herdsman. Thus the most reasonable hypothesis is that of a

wall defining the territory of a city or kingdom, marking a limit which the nomad tribes had to respect during their migrations.

Geyer 2007: 279

Without corroborating evidence, though, such an explanation remains speculative. One might also question the real efficacy of such a narrow wall as a barrier to human population movements. Might this wall have served to keep out wild animals that otherwise posed a danger to human lives and crops? Additionally, their attribution of this wall's construction to the EBA is only inferred. Might it instead date to the MBA period, or at least the very end of the EBA during a period of transition in human use of the area at the end of the third millennium?

A survey of the western part of the Khabur Triangle, being defined by the space between the wadi Jaghjagh in the east and the Khabur River to the west, thus roughly forming a triangle with its points at Qamishli, Hasseke, and Ras al-‘Ayn, has also turned up evidence relevant to the question of EBA mobility. Although the relevant periods have yet to be published in detail, preliminary results of this study show a significant difference between the eastern and the western halves of this survey area at the beginning of both the third and second millennia BC. At the beginning of the EBA, the eastern part of this survey region was defined by the existence of Ninevite 5 type wares, but these are largely lacking in the west (Lyonnet 1996: 368). Similarly, at the beginning of the second millennium, the eastern part of this zone is characterized by the presence of the so-called Khabur ware which is, again, largely, but not completely, lacking in the west (Lyonnet 1996: 371). This observation has led Lyonnet to attribute a pastoral nomadic character to human occupation of the western zone in the second millennium. This is informed by two lines of evidence, first of all the specific nature of the slight traces—

between a couple and up to only a few dozen Khabur ware sherds found in the western zone at this time (Lyonnet 1996: 371-372). Thus, there was not a different type of material culture in the west contemporary with, but stylistically distinct from, the Khabur ware 'province' characterizing the eastern part of the survey area. The second line of evidence comes from the observation of the presence of mobile groups attested in the Mari texts of the early part of the second millennium (Lyonnet 1998: 179). While her assumption that a similar explanation characterizes the EBA has been rejected here, on the grounds that contemporary, sedentary occupations are known to be contemporary to the Ninevite 5 period, no such material exists in the early part of the second millennium (see discussion above). The situation of the western Khabur Triangle, then, largely parallels that which was observed in the wadi Aḡiḡ—material culture of the second millennium is preserved in primarily small groups, in contradiction to a different pattern in the EBA. In the case of the wadi Aḡiḡ this is a near total lack of any evidence of EBA occupation of the area, whereas in the western Khabur the second millennium follows a period of disruption after an early EBA trend of urbanization.

Survey of the upland region east of Tell es-Sweyhat, though providing no MBA material for comparison to the EBA results, nonetheless largely conforms to the above observations. Five<sup>217</sup> pastoral camps dating to the late Roman or Byzantine period were identified, but only four EBA sites were noted, and those appear to have a traditional, long-term sedentary nature (Danti 2000: 271-272). The results of the survey around the Jebel 'Abd al-Aziz are somewhat more mixed. Four sites were described in Kouchoukos' summary as "Low mound/artifact scatter" (1999: 368-369). All but one of these was

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<sup>217</sup> Although Danti notes five sites in prose, his following citation lists only four sites, 1-3 and 8 (2000: 272).

dated exclusively to the early part of the EJ period. Kouchoukos commented that “the very small size of the sites and the sub-marginal productivity of local soils indicate their probable function as small hunting or pastoral camps” (1999: 376). Because the results of this survey have never been extensively published in their final form it is difficult to assess the significance of these sites, or their possible representativeness of similar unidentified sites dating to the EBA.<sup>218</sup>

Evidence of the absence of mobile populations must, by definition, come from the absence of evidence relating to their presence. Unfortunately for archaeologists, then, the question of the presence of such populations is an ongoing struggle, as the absence of evidence of some human activity in the material record is not necessarily evidence of its absence in reality. This is related, in part, to the fact that not all human activity is preserved in the archaeological record in the first place, that which is may be modified beyond the ability of excavators or surveyors to recognize them, or they may be destroyed by natural or cultural transformations to archaeological sites and remains. Methodologies employed by excavators and surveyors, informed by research goals, will also have a significant impact on the nature of the data recovered from these investigations. Owing to their relatively ephemeral nature, mobile pastoral groups

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<sup>218</sup> The question of human occupation of the Syrian Desert, and its oases, during the EBA is compelling especially in relation to the questions of mobility and pastoralism posed in this study. Unfortunately, these landscapes have been little studied. Deep soundings near the Baal temple at Palmyra have turned up evidence of EBA ceramic material, though with too little context with which to evaluate its significance (al-Maqdissi 2009). The role played by a settlement at Palmyra, and certainly its ancient name, if preserved in the Ebla corpus, is completely open to speculation. Further southwest, although technically within the borders of the modern Syrian state, the EBA sites in the Hawran region south of Damascus show material affinities with Jordan and Palestine at that time (Braemer et al. 1993: 156). These sites demonstrate a clear reliance on pastoral production. The scarcity and importance of water, though, and the rather permanent and complicated systems of water management uncovered at Khirbet Umbashi (Braemer et al. 1996) would seem to counter-indicate the sort of availability of, and access to, natural resources that are presupposed segmentary lineage structures. Nevertheless, they lay beyond the geographic scope of this study.

constitute a special category of difficulty for the archaeologists and in the greater Mesopotamian region they certainly do not benefit from generations of scholarly focus on long-term, tell-based human settlement. Significantly in this case, no sites interpreted as evidence of mobile encampments have ever been excavated. For all of these reasons, the conclusion of a hiatus in EBA human activity possibly relating to mobility in part of the Syrian landscape drawn from any one of the above mentioned surveys might be dismissed as aberrant. The combination of all of these results, though, suggests a meaningful conclusion. Not only is there no unambiguous evidence for the presence of mobile populations in Syria during the EBA, there is at least some evidence that this absence is significant and reflective of the reality of human society at that time.

## **Conclusion**

Previous material arguments for the existence of mobile pastoral groups, and therefore, possibly segmentary lineage systems, have been reviewed in this chapter. These have been shown to rest upon assumptions drawn from sedentary sites that are either invalid, or irrelevant to the question of the presence of mobile pastoral groups in the EBA. These previous studies either presumed connections between material and sociological features that have been rejected by the model espoused here, presumed sociological features which do not discriminate between segmentary lineage and non-segmentary lineage societies, or simply speculated that certain features of the archaeological record could be most readily explained by the presence of mobile pastoral groups, sometimes because of the apparent presence of such groups proximate in time or space to EBA Syria. For the most part, these explanatory models have drawn



assumptions regarding mobile pastoral societies from ‘tribalism’, with all of its etymological ambiguity, without justifying these assumptions through any explicit considerations of such societies drawn from relevant ethnographic or historical literature. An illustrative example of this kind of treatment can be found in Lisa Cooper’s 2006 book, *Early Urbanism on the Syrian Euphrates*. There, Cooper referred explicitly to Porter’s own understanding of tribalism and the tribal nature of EBA societies in the region of the Tishreen and Tabqa salvage zones as indicated by the role played by ‘ancestors’ at Tell Banat (2006: 255-256).<sup>219</sup> In support of this impression of ‘tribalism’, Cooper observed a “distinctive heterarchical character” of settlement in the region, which “may be attributed in part to the persistent tribally-structured composition of the region’s inhabitants” (2006: 63). While a specific kind of heterarchy is understood in this dissertation as being a fundamental aspect of segmentary lineage systems, segmentation more generally is not unique to such systems. By Cooper’s own admission, despite this heterarchical character, EBA settlements in this region are nevertheless defined by a great deal of inequality (2006: 272), a characteristic that contradicts the model of segmentary lineage systems developed in Chapters 2 and 3. This inequality, and the widespread sedentism with which it is associated, rules out the possibility that the heterarchical character of these communities, to the extent that it is present, can be understood in relationship to a theoretically mobile pastoral character. Thus, most of the evidence Cooper cited to support the ‘tribal’ nature of EBA Syrian societies in the Tishreen and

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<sup>219</sup> As was explained in Chapter 4, though, there is no ethnographic data to support the hypothesis that ancestor traditions have any necessary connection to segmentary lineage systems or ‘tribal’ societies in particular, however one defines that term. Porter’s connection is drawn only through a broadly kin-based definition of tribalism that harkens back to the sort of neo-evolutionary models that she ultimately criticized, as evidenced by the two sedentary analog ‘tribal’ societies that she chose to investigate this phenomenon (see discussion in Chapter 4, above).

Tabqa salvage zones is irrelevant to the question of mobile pastoralism.<sup>220</sup> Unless one rejects the specific, analogically informed association of segmentary lineage systems with mobile pastoralism that was developed in this dissertation, and instead conflates mobile pastoralism with an understanding of ‘tribalism’ that devolves somehow to ‘kinship’ and segmentation, the opinion that there is compelling evidence for a specific cultural influence originating from mobile pastoral groups in Syria during the EBA cannot be supported.<sup>221</sup> There is simply no positive material evidence of mobile societies, let alone segmentary lineage societies, and no cultural signature that requires their existence for explanation at any point in EBA Syria.

Discussions of EBA mobile pastoral groups and ‘tribalism’ are not, however, limited to archaeological literature. Further supporting evidence has been cited in historical records both from EBA Syria and later documents that purport to relate to that period. It is necessary, then, to review the veracity of these claims to fully address the possible presence and sociopolitical significance of mobile pastoral populations in EBA Syria.

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<sup>220</sup> The only ‘relevant’ supporting evidence that Cooper made reference to is drawn from the understanding of the production of a grain surplus at Tell Hajji Ibrahim (2006: 40), and references to historical sources from the MBA (2006: 61-62, 65, 271-274). The former has been shown to be factually erroneous, while the latter is not necessarily relevant to the EBA.

<sup>221</sup> These etymological relationships are illustrated in figure 2.8.

**Chapter 7**  
**Pastoralism and Segmentary Lineage Systems**  
**in Early Bronze Age Texts from Syria**

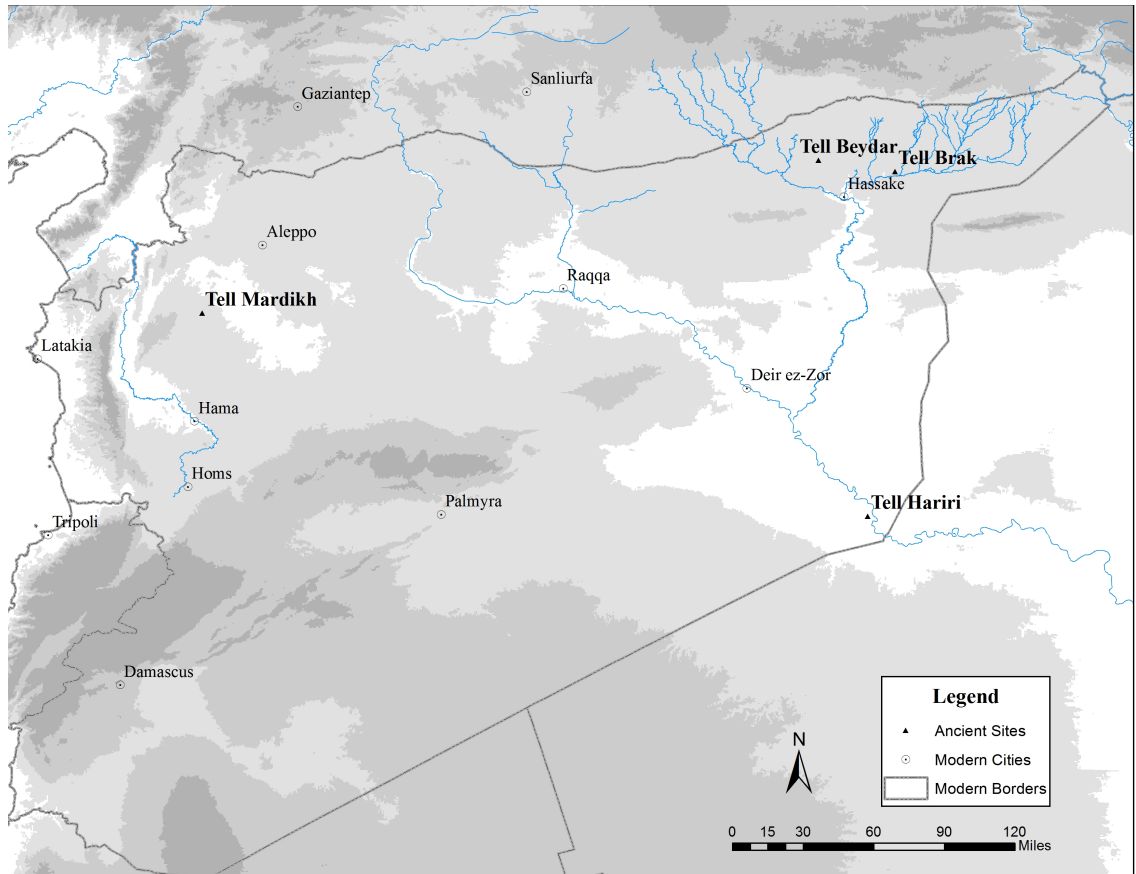
The initial chapters of this dissertation were concerned with demonstrating that segmentary lineage systems are more than merely discursive models of sociopolitical action. The opinion that such structures never serve as actual models of human action has come to predominate in anthropology because of the dubious application of such systems to societies that preserved the traces of such structures only discursively, as a result of recent and significant structural changes. Contributing to this rejection is the complex etymological history of the terms ‘tribe’, ‘tribal’, and ‘tribalism’, all of which indicate an aspect of kinship predominating in sociopolitical planes of actions, or at least some sort of opposition to a centralized, ‘state’ type of power structure. As applied to Middle Eastern societies, even more confusion arises from a common assumption that ‘tribal’ indicates some social or political aspect resulting from mobile pastoralism, or sometimes more simply segmentation. It was argued in Chapters 2 and 3, though, that segmentary lineage systems have a reality beyond discourse, and are defined by three principle structuring principles. First, members of a segmentary lineage society are divided into segments on the basis of unilineal descent. These segments relate to one another in the form of a nested hierarchy. This relationship has been diagrammed in figures 2.1 and 2.2. Second, relationships between these segments are guided by a principle balanced opposition, which is to say that in reference to the lineage structure, each segment has a moral obligation to provide aid to a more closely related segment, in opposition to a more distantly related segment. Third, there is an economic ideal in such

societies, of an independent, self-sustaining household. As the review of cultural correlates undertaken in Chapter 3 has shown, mobility and pastoralism complement these structures, being well-suited to a condition of mobile pastoral production, which, by its nature, precludes the accumulation of inter-generational wealth inequalities that might lead to the institutionalization of inequality. When that process can be detected, historically or ethnographically, among societies characterized by a segmentary lineage system, that process has been shown to undermine the structures that produce the system.

In Chapter 4, a material model of segmentary lineage systems, following from its correlates, as ascertained in Chapter 3, was defined and adapted to the material conditions of EBA Syria. The application of this model to the archaeological record of EBA Syria, in the previous chapter, showed that no material evidence exists to indicate the presence of mobile pastoral groups at any time there in the EBA. Furthermore, previously hypothesized cultural and historical effects of mobile pastoralism on the character and form of EBA polities, as they can be defined from the archaeological record, were not found to be specific to mobile pastoral societies. As was noted in Chapter 4, though, a certain amount of caution must qualify those results, as the remains of mobile groups in the archaeological record may be ephemeral. Nevertheless, comparison of EBA remains with the succeeding MBA period, when mobile pastoral groups are well-attested in the historical record, supports this conclusion. Because the presence of 'tribal' mobile pastoral groups has been interpreted in the latter part of the EBA in Syria following from analyses of the historical record of that time, it is necessary also to review the data cited in support of these interpretations.

Much scattered written evidence from EBA Syria comes from urban centers in the Khabur Triangle and dates approximately to the last three centuries of the third millennium, after settlement systems and urban life had already been disturbed in that area, and around or during a time of Akkadian political and military expansion there. The most numerous and explicit historical sources for EBA Syria are the royal archives of the ancient city of Ebla, located in Idlib province, at the modern site of Tell Mardikh, nearly 60 km south of Aleppo. These texts date to approximately the 24<sup>th</sup> century BC. Another significant group of texts have been excavated at Tell Beydar, ancient Nabada, located in the western part of the Khabur Triangle in northeastern Syria, where nearly 250 texts have been excavated. These texts belong to two chronological groups, spanning the 25<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Still more texts dealing with the EBA Syrian society originate outside the region in Southern Mesopotamia. These include pre-Sargonic, Akkadian period, and Neo-Sumerian documents, some of which are contemporary and others known from later copies. Especially relevant to this investigation is the literary tradition known from Neo-Sumerian literary texts, mostly known as copies from scribal curricula, but relating to EBA society. These texts originating outside of Syria will be considered in the next chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate evidence for the presence of groups characterized by a segmentary lineage system in texts originating in EBA Syria. Unfortunately, the vast majority of historical documentation considered in this chapter relates only to three or four centuries in the latter half of the third millennium BC. Nevertheless, the results of this analysis, though not ruling out the possibility of the



**Figure 7.1. Locations of EBA cuneiform finds in Syria**

existence of societies characterized by segmentary lineage systems in Syria during that time, largely refutes previous assertions, especially relating to texts from Ebla, that ‘tribal’ polities, or their cultural influences can be detected in these EBA Syrian texts—in other words, that there are polities with a special relationship to mobile pastoralism that lend them unique cultural and political characteristics that set them apart from other, sedentary polities.

### **Pastoralism in the Administrative Archives of Nabada**

The ancient remains of the EBA city of Nabada are located at the modern site of Tell Beydar on the right bank of the Wadi ‘Awaidj, some 35 km north northwest of

Hasseke (Lebeau 1997: 7). Topographically, the site resembles the standard third millennium *kranzhügel* type.<sup>222</sup> The outer-most circular crest, corresponding to a defensive perimeter, encapsulates an area of approximately 28 hectares. The site is dominated by a circular, central high mound that measures some three hundred meters in diameter and rises approximately twenty meters above the level of the surrounding plain, being somewhat eroded on the north and west faces (Lebeau 1997: 8-9). Excavators first reached EBA levels there in 1993 (Lebeau and Suleiman 1997: 1). Over three seasons, through 1995, 147 EBA tablets were excavated, 140 of which were found on the northern slope of the high mound in a small building dubbed the “*Maison aux Tablettes*” (Ismail et al. 1996: 31). Further texts were found in the 1996-97 and 1999 seasons of excavation, primarily in an administrative complex dubbed the “Official Block” (Sallaberger 2004: 14). The stratigraphic context of these Beydar texts, associated ceramics, their physical forms, organization, and internal paleographic features all suggest a date for their composition of around 2400 BC (Sallaberger 2004: 14, cf. Ismail et al. 1996: 31).<sup>223</sup> Despite their different find spots, these texts are predominantly of the same form and internal organization and seem to relate to one another as monthly administrative records belonging to a public institution dealing primarily with agricultural and pastoral production, the distribution of grain and wool, and some related records and expenses (Ismail et al. 1996: 32; Sallaberger 2004: 13).<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> See discussion on this phenomenon in Chapter 6.

<sup>223</sup> There is also the possibility that Paba, the wife IbLUL-il, ruler of Mari a half century before the end of the Ebla archives, is mentioned in Beydar text no. 23 (Ismail et al. 1996: 31). Thus, the Beydar texts could be contemporaneous with the earlier parts of the Ebla corpus.

<sup>224</sup> A further 17 texts were excavated in 2002 and 2005 in Field I. All but one of these remains unpublished (see Sallaberger 2004: 121, text 216). On lexicographic and paleographic grounds, Sallaberger has dated these texts to between 25 and 40 years earlier than the main archive (2011: 333).

*The shepherds of Nabada*

The administrative texts from Tell Beydar, ancient Nabada, demonstrate that city's status at the time of their creation to be a secondary political and economic center within the state of Nagar, its capital located approximately 30 km to the east at modern Tell Brak. The nearly 250 texts that have been excavated at Tell Beydar deal almost exclusively with grain and wool production and distribution.<sup>225</sup> These texts suggest that the pastoral activity they record was highly specialized, closely managed, and integrated into a unified agro-pastoral strategy of production. Although the following analysis of herd demographics suggests that the landscape around Tell Beydar was not 'full', an argument that has been offered as precluding the existence of independent pastoral populations (contra Sallaberger 2014), it nonetheless provides no positive evidence for the involvement of such groups in the activity recorded by the texts.

Most relevant to this question of the integration of pastoral and agricultural production at ancient Nabada is the presence and nature of the group of individuals called *ba-ri udu*. Documents concerning individuals of this group number approximately fifty (cf. Van Lerberghe 1996a: 107; Sallaberger 2004: 13). This term is argued by Sallaberger to have the significance of 'shepherd,' literally "the one who supervises the sheep" (Sallaberger 1996: 94).<sup>226</sup> If *ba* could be read *wá* at Nabada, an alternative reading of *wá-ri udu*, literally "(the one who) leads sheep" could also be offered.<sup>227</sup> This pastoral interpretation of *ba-ri udu* seems clear owing to the sheep and goat inspection

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<sup>225</sup> The only exceptions are a single legal text and three school texts (Ismail et al. 1996: 32).

<sup>226</sup> The more common way of writing shepherd, the sumerogram *si pa*, is only encountered in a single text, having a unique character in the archive (Sallaberger 1996: 94 n23).

<sup>227</sup> Though this would have the same basic implication of 'shepherd', it might carry a connotation of taking place somewhere away from the main settlement. This would complement the interpretation of sheep herd management from the texts presented below.



documents, a corpus composed of some eighteen texts (nos. 118 and 151-167), excavated primarily from room 6954 of the Official Block, where they likely formed part of a larger group of similar tablets (Sallaberger 2004: 13). These texts record the attribution of sheep and/or goats to individuals by the personal names (PNs) of those individuals. Identical PNs are attested elsewhere in the Nabada corpus as *ba-ri* u du (Sallaberger 2004: 13-14, 16). Oddly, though, the *ba-ri* u du also figure prominently in a few texts relating to the composition of plow teams, being even more widely attested in this regard, it seems, than were the agricultural workers<sup>228</sup> (Van Lerberghe 1996a: 117).

The number and organization of the *ba-ri* u du is unclear. On prosopographical bases, Sallaberger has established at least sixteen different individuals in the sheep and goat inspection corpus (2004: 15). A wider survey of individuals so classified, and with unique PNs, brings this total to thirty (2004: 18). This accords well with the number of *ba-ri* u du attributed to single u gu la s in the personnel lists (2004: 18, cf. Sallaberger 1996: 94). The appearance of five different u gu la *ba-ri* u du, though, in texts identified only by month names and not year dates introduces a great degree of ambiguity. As Sallaberger asked, "...do we deal with one household managed successively by five persons or with five households, which would lead to a number of 130-140 *ba-ri* u du?" (2004: 18). The latter number would accord well with the plow-texts, particularly no. 3, which includes more than 140 *ba-ri* u du (Sallaberger 2006: 18, cf. Van Lerberghe 1996a: 115-116). This, of course, raises the question of what shepherds would be doing plowing fields in the first place.<sup>229</sup> The question of the sociopolitical nature of this group and the

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<sup>228</sup> On the interpretation of the group *lu-giš-DU* as agricultural workers see Sallaberger 1996: 93.

<sup>229</sup> This fact seems to have led Van Lerberghe to doubt this interpretation of *ba-ri* u du, but he was unable to offer any other explanation (1996: 117). The discovery since of tablets 151-167, and their relationship to 118, discussed below, seems to preclude any alternative interpretation.

nature of its social, political, and economic relationship with the institution responsible for the production of these documents remains unclear. It is probable that the term *ba-rí u du* denotes a profession, and that these people are sedentary residents of the urban center of Nabada, being fully integrated into a sedentary, urban socio-political system. It is also possible that the term is just as sociological, relating to a mobile and pastoral society and that those *ba-rí u du* appearing in the documentation at Nabada are simply those with economic connections to the administration (Sallaberger 2006: 18, cf. Van Lerberghe 1996b: 121).

Sallaberger, though, has recently rejected this latter possibility, arguing instead that the texts indicate a workforce “integrated in the urban communal management” of Nabada (2014: 101). In making this rejection he also cited an argument that has been made more widely for parts of the Khabur drainage from archaeological data—that dense occupation at the height of EBA urbanization would have precluded the possibility of independent pastoralist groups in these areas (2014: 102). He supported this observation by appeal to the Nabada corpus itself, arguing that “the space necessary for the sheep and goats of Nabada corresponds to about half of the province's total surface; this leaves little room, if any, for independent groups, especially if one allows for cattle, equids, and royal herds as well” (2014: 102).<sup>230</sup> The below analysis of herd management strategies as they

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<sup>230</sup> This and similar arguments rely on derived estimates of animal consumption and carrying capacity that depend upon accurate ecological modeling. Issues of site occupation contemporaneity in the region and agricultural practices are also relevant. These issues have been addressed in the previous chapter. It remains only to point out here that any conclusions drawn from the administrative texts of Nabada themselves suffer from serious caveats. First, at present, the window of time covered by these texts is unclear. They appear to span a period of at least two years (Sallaberger 1996: 92), but possibly be more. Even if they do date to a small span of time, they would seem to relate to a period very near to the end of the Nabada IV period, after which structures of the Official Block seem to have been deliberately demolished and were filled in, and the area terraced, with no comparable administrative structures identifiable in the following period (Lebeau 2003: 26). Thus, the documents may well record an economic and/or an administrative situation that departed from the previous trajectory of EBA history at the site.

are recorded in these documents suggest that, in fact, herds were in the process of expanding, at least for the duration spanned by this archive. Nevertheless, Sallaberger's recent position is upheld by this analysis following from the reconstruction of herd demographics, which suggests a highly specialized bureaucratic integration not only of agriculture and pastoralism, but even the specialization and integration of two different pastoral strategies.

### *Herd Management Strategies at Nabada*

Two different but closely related classes of texts are relevant to the reconstruction of the Nabada administration's herds during the period covered by its main text corpus. These are the eighteen texts of the sheep and goat inspection corpus, mentioned above, and the nine 'plucking' texts, which record the collection of wool by individual flock and shepherd (Van Lerberghe 1996: 107). They relate the following information regarding the size of herds and the ratios of sheep to goat, males to females, and lambing rates. First, sheep and goats are kept in separate flocks (Sallaberger 2004: 19). Sallaberger does not address the question of why this would be the case, but in light of the different sex ratios within these populations, it seems that different production strategies govern the two species. In sheep herds, the ratio of males to females is approximately 1:1.86, i.e. males made up slightly more than one-third of the herd population (Sallaberger 2004: 19). Meanwhile, the goat flocks seem to have consisted entirely of females, he-goats being found only in the sheep herds, and usually numbering only one or two, but in one case four (Sallaberger 2004: 19-20). The sheep sex ratio is consistent with the impression given by the administrative texts: the emphasis of production was upon fiber

(Sallaberger 2004: 19). A nutritional emphasis would be expected to produce a much smaller number of males, which would be culled up to a point at which they could constitute as little as 1.6% of the population, or 1:60, but more often approximately 3%, or 1:32 (Redding 1981: 282-83).<sup>231</sup> The nearly 1:2 ratio at Nabada is consistent with a robust investment in the long-term security of the herd, but is most likely simply a result of a natural birth rate sex ratio (approximately 1:1, see Kent 1995) and modest culling of the male population (see below) primarily in pursuit of a fiber production strategy, and only secondarily meat production. The very small male to female ratio among goats at Nabada, on the order of 1%, accords very well with a goal of nutritional production in the form of meat and the maintenance of a dairy herd, for that species, in a situation without serious environmental insecurity (Redding 1981: 283, 290). Despite the lack of documentation relevant to the production and disbursement of meat resulting from the culling of male goats, this must have been a significant feature of the economy of ancient Nabada. A total flock of 2072 she-goats would yield nearly 1000 male goat births per year (Redding 1981: 131-32), nearly all of which appear to have been culled. The different production strategies would also accord well with the relative strengths of these species. Goats are better adapted to both arid and potentially over-grazed environments than are sheep (Redding 1981: 260) and, therefore, they may have been pastured closer to the city or in more marginal areas. Sheep are more sensitive to aridity and overgrazing and would have been more likely to be pastured at a distance from the settlement, in preferential grazing areas. This would have precluded the production of sheep-derived

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<sup>231</sup> A higher male ratio is expected when the goal of nutritional off-take is balanced against the goal of long-term herd security in demanding environments (Redding 1981: 290). Nonetheless, the male to female ratio among the sheep herds recorded in the texts from Nabada are consistent with a primary goal of fiber production.

dairy products, a fact reflected by the large ratio of males to females. These different production strategies likely account for their separate and specialized herding strategies, especially if goats were being exploited for dairy products. Furthermore, the reliability of the sheep herders is obvious by the fact that they are entrusted with the few he-goats, vitally important to the maintenance of the dairy herd.

The eighteen sheep and goat inspection tablets from Nabada also provide some information on the ratio of lambs to ewes and speaks to the effective fertility rate of the sheep herds, under their condition of human management. These figures can only be drawn from four texts, giving a total number of 209 lambs to 703 ewes. Sallaberger pointed out that “taken at face value, this would correspond to an extremely low lambing rate of 23% to 38%, if compared to the Old Babylonian norm of 80% (Kraus 1966, 26) or other ancient Mesopotamian rates of 50% to 78% (Ryder 1993, 19)” (2004: 19). The raw quotient of the above numbers produces a ratio of 29.73 %. On its face this value is, indeed, low. Modern studies of Middle Eastern populations suggest an annual reproductive rate per estrous ewe of between 0.8 and 1.2 (Redding 1981: 110). This number, though, does not take into account any mortality in the first year of life, human (i.e., culling), or otherwise. Sallaberger did not propose any explanation for the disparity, but instead offered a few points of speculation:

Was therefore a larger number of lambs deducted for meat consumption? Are these the sheep fed with grain and kept in stables...? Or is only a certain percentage of all lambs ready for a first plucking, whereas others would be plucked first during the following year, then counted with ‘ewes’ and ‘rams’?

Sallaberger 2014: 19

From the information provided in these four texts—admittedly not a robust sample, although very possibly representative—a plausible solution to this problem is suggested.

First, Sallaberger's calculation seems to take into consideration the number of lambs relative to all ewes. In a population such as this, with such a large ratio of males and organized obviously for the maximization of wool production, there is likely to be a large number of older, non-estrous females, in addition to a few yearling females who have also not yeaned. The proportion of reproductive ewes, in a naturally producing population—which this population is likely to be, given the emphasis on fiber production—is approximately 61% (Redding 1981: 131). Taking this into consideration gives a fertility ratio of  $209 / (703 \times 0.61) = 44.9\%$ . Furthermore, these documents seem to have been compiled after weaning, which usually takes place after five months (Sallaberger 2004: 19). Taking into account an average natural mortality rate in the first five months of life for lambs of about 32%, this would suggest that the number of lambs reflected in these texts does not reflect the actual birth rate, but only 68% of that rate. 209 lambs are 68% of just over 307 total births. Thus, a reconstructed lambing rate is equivalent to 307 lambs from 429 reproductive ewes, or about 71.5%. Regarding the deduction of lambs for meat consumption, if these numbers reflect only the lambs which are to continue residing with their herds, then additional off-take must be computed. It is unlikely that any lambs were slaughtered. Culling usually takes places between twelve and eighteen months of age. Owing to the ratio of males to females in the sheep population, assuming that the males intended for culling are not included, and given the approximate 1:1 ratio of males to females in live sheep births, it would appear that approximately 50% of the male population is being culled. Relevant to this point, four texts record the fattening of sheep, fed with grain, within the urban center of Nabada itself (Sallaberger 2004: 21). One of these texts records this number as approximately

120 individuals. These individuals are possibly the missing male animals from one cycle of lambing. If these individuals are added back to the number of lambs, the resulting birth rate is:  $(307 + 120) / (703 \times 0.61) = 99.5\%$ . Because culling might not take place until after one year of age, the grain-fed group might actually include the contributions of two different lambing seasons, in which case we would expect the ratio of males from the most recent lambing to the previous lambing to be approximately 2:1, half of the previous set having been slaughtered. In that case,  $(307 + 80) / (703 \times 0.61) = 90.2\%$ . This range, approximately 90-100% is an excellent ratio compared with the birth rate expected from ancient and contemporary Middle Eastern sources.<sup>232</sup>

The major implication of this demographic study is that an effective annual fertility ratio of 30%, after all deductions are accounted for, as recorded in these texts, supplies slightly more than twice the amount of individuals needed for the herd to replace annual losses due to disease and predation, assuming a natural age profile (Redding 1981: 115, 120). If these calculations are accurate, they suggest either that deaths due to disease and predation suffered by the Nabada herds were higher than estimates drawn from contemporary sources, or that the texts reflect a modest growth rate of the flock numbers at the time of their composition. If the latter is the case, as suggested by the low sex ratio of male to female goats, it casts some doubt on Sallaberger's argument that the texts reflect that the area around Tell Beydar was already at or near carrying capacity (2014). If, however, the situation recorded in the texts reflects a managed growth of herds in response to a demographic downturn, it might indicate only that the established herds

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<sup>232</sup> While any of these assumed values might be inaccurate to one degree or another, owing to historically specific circumstances resulting in annual demographic changes, their relatively neat explanation of the apparent low fertility problem is compelling.

were returning to a population approximating the carrying capacity of the surrounding landscape.

*Segmentary Lineage Implications at Nabada*

There is, then, no evidence for independent mobile pastoral producers in the texts excavated from Nabada. Instead, agricultural and pastoral activities seem to have been closely correlated, to the point that even different and complementary pastoral strategies, certainly carried out in different locations, were nevertheless fundamentally integrated. Whatever results are drawn from the Nabada texts, it must be stressed that the breadth of these documents is unclear and the period to which they relate is probably restricted in time, quite possibly to a period reflecting an administrative, economic, and/or ecological situation that was not representative of the EBA as a whole, either before or after. The texts concern the administrative interests of an entity involved in the production and management of agricultural and pastoral resources. To that end, it is difficult to say very much about other sectors of the population or economy, or their organization. Nevertheless, it is clear that pastoral production was of significant interest and a primary economic pursuit of the central administration. The close management and integration of both sheep and goat herds into a unified productive strategy seems to preclude the possibility that the productive efforts of any independent mobile pastoral groups are recorded in these texts.



## **Segmentary Lineage Systems and Mobile Pastoralism in the Royal Archives of Ebla**

By far the richest source of historical information on the EBA in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia comes from the royal archives of the ancient city of Ebla. Although ambiguities inherent in both the writing system employed in the archives as well the Eblaite language have necessarily produced a picture of EBA society in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia with many lacunae, continuing progress in understanding and contextualizing the information preserved in these archives is producing an ever-clearer picture of an EBA Syrian city-state, its international sociopolitical context, and the course of history that unfolded over the period of the archive's compilation. The texts from Ebla are of significance not only because of the potential that they preserve information relevant to the presence or absence of groups characterized by a segmentary lineage systems in Ebla's area of interest, but also because they contain information that speaks to the sociopolitical context of the EBA landscape, within which any consideration of mobile pastoralism (or its absence) must ultimately be situated. After reviewing the nature of these archives and summarizing current opinions about EBA Syrian society drawn from them during the period they cover, I will then review the evidence that has been marshaled by some to argue for the existence of 'tribal' elements in the archives and investigate the existence of societies characterized by segmentary lineage systems, on the basis of those structural features defined in Chapter 2, and the correlate features identified in Chapter 3.

### *The Royal Archives of Ebla*

The remains of the ancient city of Ebla are located at the modern site of Tell Mardikh, situated on an agricultural plain approximately 55 kilometers south of Aleppo in Idlib province, in northwest Syria. Initial excavations of Tell Mardikh by Italian teams began in 1964 and systematic excavations had been ongoing at the site from 1968 until 2010 (Matthiae 2013a: 36). In 1975 and 1976 excavators unearthed a trove of cuneiform-inscribed clay tablets, mostly from a single shelf-lined room in a large administrative building dominating the high central part of the mound, dating to the late EBA. Primarily these texts came from Palace G, room L.2769, the so-called Great Archive (Matthiae 2013a: 37), but they also included another five groups of texts from around the Administrative Quarter of the palace (Matthiae 2013b: 52). At present count, the cuneiform texts recovered from Ebla include 2,436 complete tablets and 13,947 fragments (Samir n.d., *apud* Streck 2010: 39, 58). These documents include a few literary texts, lexical lists, and scribal exercises, but are overwhelmingly administrative in character (Milano 1995: 1223). While there are some chronological outliers, the bulk of the texts cover “a period of approximately 45 to 50 years of which the last 36 are best documented...” (Biga 2003: 358).<sup>233</sup> The period came to a close only with the destruction of Tell Mardikh level IIB1 by fire, an event which also served to bake and preserve the tablets. This episode of destruction came, more or less by definition, at the end of the EB IVA, or “the high Early Syrian period” in the terminology preferred by the excavators of Tell Mardikh (Matthiae 2013a: 37). Recently, Archi and Biga (2003: 35), through cautious and laborious prosopographic study of the documents (e.g. Biga 2003:

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<sup>233</sup> Their span is long enough that the evolution of some record-keeping practices are evident in the archives (e.g. Archi 2010: 8).

345), have marshaled chronological data that seems to fix the date of the destruction of level IIB1 to approximately the 15<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Lugalzagesi.<sup>234</sup> Thus, the bulk of the texts from Ebla span from approximately 2340/2300 to 2290/2250 BC, according to a reduced middle chronology—only a small part of the roughly millennium-long period with which this study is concerned. Despite this relatively narrow window on EBA Syrian society, the archives are nonetheless the best and most explicit source of sociological and historical information on this area of the ancient world until the MBA.

Only a small portion of documents in the Ebla archives are explicitly political in nature. These include letters to and from the king of Ebla and his agents or the kings of other independent Syrian polities, including the texts of treaties negotiated between them. The bulk of the documents were created with the concern of recording (and controlling) the flow of goods through the central administration,<sup>235</sup> headquartered in the palace at the heart of the city. Many more types of goods are concerned than bear mentioning here, but it suffices to say that the most common were types of textiles and metals, in the form of both tribute from dependent polities and gifts exchanged between the Eblaite royal family and the rulers of independent polities elsewhere in Syria, Anatolia, and Northern Mesopotamia. These documents, especially when arranged in their chronological order, are valuable sources of political and historical information (Biga 2003), as well as

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<sup>234</sup> This places the end of the period spanned by the archive at between 2290 and 2250 BC by the reduced middle chronology (cf. Sallaberger 2011: 333). The proximate source of the destruction of IIB1 has commonly been thought to have been a Sargonic king (e.g. Pettinato 1976; Matthiae 1981; Gelb 1981; von Soden 1988; Matthiae 1988; Matthiae 2013a), but the work carried out by Archi and Biga (2003) effectively rules out this possibility. Maintaining that the fire could not have been accidental (cf. Astour 2002: 75; Postgate 1986b: 68), Archi and Biga (2003: 35), suggested that the forces of Mari may have been responsible for wreaking the destruction of Mardikh IIB1 and bringing the period of the royal archives to a close.

<sup>235</sup> This phrase is used here in some sense metaphorically. Although there was undoubtedly a great deal of material going into and out of storehouses in and around Ebla, one of the most important technological aspects of writing is that it allows for the monitoring of production and distribution *at a distance*. Thus, the royal archives were almost certainly also concerned with goods that, though belonging to the administration, may have never traveled far from their places of production.

important witnesses to the cultural character of EBA Syrian and Northern Mesopotamian polities.

Certain features of the Ebla texts obscure a complete understanding of the data they record. For instance, the written language of the archives, “a Semitic language embodying East and West Semitic features” (Gordon 1997: 101), and commonly referred to as ‘Eblaite’<sup>236</sup> is encoded in cuneiform, a system originally created to be entirely logographic, which then evolved to accommodate the syllabic writing of the agglutinative Sumerian language, for which it is relatively well suited. The adaptation of Sumerian cuneiform in the Ebla archives obscures linguistic features of Eblaite in a few different ways. First, there are the related problems of homophony and polyphony, which are familiar to the cuneiform scholar. Second, there is an incredible reliance on the use of Sumerograms in the texts, even beyond the purely administrative accounts. Sometimes these are accompanied by Eblaite linguistic particles such as prepositions or phonetic complements, but often they are not. Third, the meaning of many of these Sumerograms is sometimes either unrelated to their Sumerian meanings, or has a specific derived sense which is difficult to identify.<sup>237</sup> Fourth, the Ebla texts as a whole are characterized by an extreme brevity and parsimony of writing, especially in the earlier periods, and it seems that, even when direct speech is recorded, not all parts of speech are indicated. Fifth, the underlying language, while known to be Semitic, is not fully comprehended. Sixth, the organization of the administrative texts, especially—and this is not a feature unique to such texts at Ebla—often proceeds on the presumption that the reader is familiar with the system. Thus, they are not entirely explicit regarding the significance of their internal

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<sup>236</sup> Note, though, the occasional preference for ‘Eblaic’ (e.g. Sollberger 1986: 1; Conti 1992).

<sup>237</sup> For instance see the discussion of *sa-ga-z*, below.

organization. Despite these difficulties, and the fact that most of the texts are rather narrowly concerned with monthly and annual expenditures of goods to various parties, the royal archives do allow for the characterization of the political organization of the Eblaite polity and also provide invaluable social and cultural context for its orientation in the EBA landscape of Syria and Northern Mesopotamia—context just as significant for the understanding of sedentary, urban polities as for potential EBA segmentary lineage systems in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia.

### *Offices in the Eblaite Bureaucracy and Hierarchy*

As mentioned above, the texts excavated from Tell Mardikh show clearly that at the heart of the Eblaite polity there was a highly centralized and hierarchical bureaucracy. It seems that this polity was referred to in the texts sometimes as Ebla, *ib-la*<sup>ki</sup> (Bonechi 1993: 191-192), and sometimes as the palace, or palatial complex at the center of the city, SA.ZA<sub>x</sub><sup>ki</sup> (Archi 2009: 108). The city, palace, and polity were ruled by a line of hereditary monarchs called *mal(i)kum*, meaning ‘king’ in Eblaite, but most often written with the sumerogram *en*, equivalent in meaning to the use of the sumerogram *lugal* at Mari, Kish, and other contemporary Mesopotamian polities (Archi 1987a: 37). While the *en* is rarely ever mentioned by name, a fact which has proven rather inconvenient for the purposes of constructing a chronology of the archive, the second-highest office in the bureaucracy actually bears no title.<sup>238</sup> Its holder was only ever referred to by name, but for the sake of convenience this office is usually referred to as the ‘vizier’.<sup>239</sup> In the texts

<sup>238</sup> This is a fact which may carry historical and sociopolitical implications (cf. Archi 2010, esp. 8-9).

<sup>239</sup> The office of vizier seems to have only ever been occupied by a single person at a time. Three different individuals are known to have occupied this office at Ebla, in succession, for what appear to have been life-long terms. In order, these are Arrukum (*Ar-EN-LUM*), Ibrium, and Ibrium’s son, Ibbi-zikir. A son of

that record the annual metal contributions to the palace—the so-called ‘contribution’ or ‘mu-DU’ documents—the vizier is listed first as the greatest single contributor.

Confusingly, the sumerogram *lu gal*, also appears in the Ebla texts. Instead of its usual significance of Akkadian *šarrum*, ‘king,’ it is attested at Ebla to mean *bēlum*, or ‘lord’ and indicates some class of administrative official (e.g. Archi 2006b: 13). The exact nature of this status or office is unclear. One of the most economically important duties carried out by these officials seems to be recorded in texts that document the annual income of the palace administration, where they are recorded as contributing various amounts of metals, mostly in the form of silver but also sometimes in gold or bronze (e.g. Archi 1991: 206), though less than the vizier, who is usually attested as having contributed a far greater amount than even the sum of that contributed by the *lu gal*.<sup>240</sup> The *lu gal* are sometimes recorded in relationship to a toponym, implying ownership, authority, or at least oversight of a specific location or settlement (Archi 1991: 204-218). At other times they are attributed with a specific function in the administration, such as having charge of livestock, for instance, or oversight of another type of official, the *ugula* (Archi 1993: 48). The *lu gal* are also recorded as possessing, or perhaps controlling or overseeing, agricultural production and the activities of laborers (Archi 1993: 48). The number of *lu gal* attested in the texts of the archives at any one time have been reported by Archi to be between fifteen and twenty-five (1991: 206), but for the last thirty-five years of the archives to be between only ten and twelve (2006b:

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Ibbi-zikir, Tubuḫu-Ḥadda, is thought to have been intended as heir to the office before the destruction of Mardikh IIB1. The office does not appear, initially, to have been a hereditary one, though it became so under the tenure of Ibrium (Archi 2010: 9).

<sup>240</sup> This is true especially later, during the latter part of the tenure of Ibrium and Ibbi-zikir (Archi 2010: 8). It is also worth noting that before becoming a vizier himself, Ibrium is attested as a *lu gal* during Arrukum’s tenure (Archi 1991: 212-213).

13). The exact nature of this group of individuals and the basis of their relationship to the royal administration is still ambiguous. While the office of *ugula* is attested more widely and commonly than *lugal*, it is nonetheless also mysterious. The term *ugula* is often translated as ‘overseer’ or ‘superintendent’, commensurate with its contemporary use in texts from southern Mesopotamia. The *ugula* often appear to have been in charge of groups of workers or economic activities within the houses (*é*) of other administrative officials (e.g. Archi et al. 1988: 268), but are sometimes also mentioned in connection with toponyms, implying, as for the *lugal*, control or administrative responsibility of some kind over that place (Biga 2013: 260). The impression left by a review of these three offices is of a pyramidal hierarchy proceeding from the *en*, at the apex, to a handful of *lugal*, then to more numerous *ugula*.

There existed also other functionaries with more specific roles in the administration. Sometimes the titles of these individuals make their roles obvious, while others are more opaque. For instance, *kaš* is a sumerogram that is widely attested in the cuneiform world to have the meaning ‘messenger’. The role of the *lú-kar* official is more mysterious, though the presence of the sumerogram *kar*, ‘harbor’ implies some connection to trade or the shipment of goods. It is important to note that like *ens*, and unlike countless other types of officials, the royal archives record the existence of both *lugals* and *ugulas* outside of the Eblaite polity, associated with independent toponyms. The distinction between the two titles in this international context is ambiguous and though it has been argued that the terms sometimes appear to alternate in a synonymous fashion (Archi 1987a: 42-43), their semantic relationship is unclear.

Seemingly existing outside the bureaucratic system of Ebla was a class of persons referred to collectively as *ábba* (AB×ÁŠ), usually referred to in the plural with sign reduplication (*ábba.ábba*), and translated as ‘elders’, following the contemporary meaning of the sign in southern Mesopotamia (cf. Archi 2006b). The nature of this class of individuals is even more ambiguous than the *luga*l. Foreign *ábba.ábba* are often attested as receiving gifts from the *en* of Ebla. There is never any clear indication, however, that these individuals are members of the households of foreign leaders, or members of the household of the *en* of Ebla. There is also never any clear indication that this class of individual serves in any specific official capacity.<sup>241</sup> In one case, however, their involvement in the practice of the royal cult seems to be indicated at Ebla (Milano 1990: 87, 333-334, 376). They seem to be at once a part of the polities they are attributed to, but separate from the administration of those polities. Nevertheless, they clearly sit in a unique and important relationship with the leaders of those polities. It is also possible that the *ábba.ábba* include individuals that hold other titles as well, or do serve in some official capacity outside of this distinction, but the archives are silent on this point.<sup>242</sup>

Archi has previously stated that “there is no doubt that the city of Ebla had the characteristics of a ‘central place’ administered according to a redistributive system. The

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<sup>241</sup> Once, in TM.76.G.749, three individuals are described as *ábba* of a village, Irkutu (*ír-ku-tu<sup>ki</sup>*), receiving a large loan of silver from two different polities (Archi 2002: 96-98). Archi has speculated that this loan may have been necessitated to meet a financial obligation to the palace administration (2006b: 17). Together with a second text that may indicate the repayment of this loan, TM.75.G.1919, these are the only published cases known to me where *ábba* are actually mentioned by name (Archi 2002: 97).

<sup>242</sup> Archi also advocated the hypothesis that the elders are leaders of independent households (1988d: 2), finding support for his two-sector model especially in texts which document an association with rural centers (2006b: 19). For a more thorough critique of Archi’s model, along with that of his primary competitor in this regard, David Schloen, see the excursus following this chapter. There Archi’s point will be maintained, though on the basis of a significant different structuring principle than that which either he or Schloen have put forward.



archives record precisely and with great exactness the goods entering and going out” (1993: 49). As mentioned above, numerous texts record palace income in terms of comestible, textile, and metal goods. The mu-DU texts record textile and metal contributions of both lugal s and also other polities (Archi 1991). Some of the most important economic texts are the annual accounts of metals (AAM) and the monthly accounts of textiles (MAT). Unlike the texts detailing palace income, these texts record the respective disbursement of those goods from palace holdings and, as a result of being more formulaic and regular, are easier to interpret. There are about five hundred MATs preserved in more or less complete form in the royal archives. They record not only the quantity and type of goods dispersed but also their assignees and, sometimes, the reason for the assignation. These assignations may be made to individuals within or outside of the Eblaite administration. When assigned to Eblaite officials or members of the Eblaite polity in general, this is usually the result of some service rendered to the administration or as rations to laborers or craftsmen employed by the administration (Archi 2011: 46) or to officers of the administration, royal family members, or the á b b a. á b b a. Besides the significance of textiles and metals recorded in these texts, the royal archives more broadly suggest that the most important products of the Eblaite polity were grain, olive oil, and wine. Unfortunately, it is not possible to quantify agricultural production or calculate agricultural surpluses for royal properties, especially through time, as these documents were not preserved for posterity (Archi 2006b: 14). The property owned by the administration, though, was not limited to agricultural land alone. A few texts dated to the last few months before the destruction of Mardikh IIb1 show that the palace also enjoyed the production of many herds of sheep and goat, numbering around one hundred

thousand heads, which Archi estimates would have been capable of producing approximately 64 tons of raw wool per annum (1993: 47), as well as ten thousand cattle (Archi 2006a: 99). Furthermore, it is possible to hypothesize, but unclear from the present understanding, whether or not various administration officials, who were apparently granted productive estates, also had to contribute some of the productive capacity of these estates to the administration (Archi 1992: 27-28). Thus, despite some lacunae, there is ample documentary evidence at Ebla to record both the gathering of income to the palace from administration officials and royal estates, in the form of comestibles, textiles, and metals, and the disbursement of all these goods to individuals who were presumably employed by or dependent on the central administration.

The extent to which this characterization captures the totality of the socioeconomic system of the Eblaite polity, however, is unclear. A few texts seem to indicate independent economic activity in the form of entrepreneurial trade. Two documents which attest the commercial activities of private individuals are TM.75.G.1245 (Archi 2005) and TM.75.G.1753 (ARET II 29<sup>243</sup>; Milano 2003). Other documents demonstrate that merchants sometimes received consignments of silver from the central administration and were charged with doing business abroad on its behalf, though they were presumably pursuing their own personal profits as well (Archi 2005: 18). Archi has gone so far as to

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<sup>243</sup> In the proceeding discussion, publications of Ebla texts in the series *Archivi Reali di Ebla*, *Testi* will be referred to by this abbreviation. ARET II = Edzard 1981. ARET I = Archi 1985b; ARET III = Archi and Biga 1982; ARET IV = Biga and Milano 1984; ARET V = Edzard 1984; ARET VII = Archi 1988c; ARET VIII = Sollberger 1986; ARET IX = Milano 1990; ARET XII = Lahlouh and Catagnoli 2006; ARET XIII = Fronzaroli 2003; ARET XV = Pomponio 2008; ARET XVI = Catagnoli and Fronzaroli 2010. Publications of Ebla texts in the series *Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla* will be referred to by the abbreviation MEE. MEE 2 = Pettinato 1980; MEE 5 = Pettinato 1996; MEE 7 = D'Agostino 1996b; MEE 10 = Mander 1990; MEE 12 = Waetzoldt 2001.

suggest that the very lack of documentation relating to the activity of merchants attests to their independence (2005: 19).<sup>244</sup>

Also independent from the situation of redistribution, at least that taking place entirely within the Eblaite polity, was the circulation of textiles and precious metals between the Eblaite administration and the administrations of other independent polities elsewhere in Syria and northern Mesopotamia. The AAMs and MATs also document this activity. These consignments were made to the leaders of polities qualified sometimes as *en*s, *badālum* (who seem, sometimes, to function as an *en*, and other times are mentioned after an *en*, and whose appearance seems to have been restricted to an area northeast of Ebla, Biga 2013: 260), *lugal*, *ugula*, and individuals associated with their administrations, especially their immediate family and, again, the mysterious *ábba.ábba*. These consignments were made not as a result of services rendered or goods exchanged, but rather seem to have taken place on social occasions such as births, deaths, and marriages. As Archi has demonstrated, this ‘international’ flow of goods does not seem to make sense when viewed from a strictly economic point of view (Archi 1993). Concerning at least the polities of Harran, Imar, Mari, and Tuttul, Archi has shown that “shipments by Ebla... of clothing for the king and elders of those cities...; and similar consignments to some other officials” were balanced by “a flow of more or less analogous items in the opposite direction” (Archi 1993: 53). The purpose of these reciprocal exchanges, Archi surmised, must have been to maintain balanced, amicable relationships between the Eblaite state and independent foreign polities (1993: 55-56).

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<sup>244</sup> This argument is circular, however, as even though independent economic activities on the part of a contemporary Syrian merchant class would not be recorded in the royal archives—concerned primarily with the economic activities of the central administration—the lack of such documentation might also result from the relative lack of such activity in the first place.

Unfortunately, these documents allow very little inference into the sociopolitical systems of these independent polities beyond the fact that broadly analogous political offices were recognized by the Eblaite administration. The disparity of titles applied to the leaders of these different polities, whether *en*, *lugal*, or *ugula*, could indicate functional distinctions related to sociopolitical differences, or they may simply result from linguistic and cultural differences between polities, independent of any functional distinctions, or they might simply relate to the relative political and economic significance of those individuals in the broader Upper Mesopotamian political context.

### *'Tribalism' in Ebla Studies*

Approaches to the study of tribalism in the royal archives of Ebla fall within the range of implications and assumptions following from that term's curious etymology, compounded with mobile pastoralism in the Middle East, as has been summarized in relationship to Near Eastern studies more broadly in Chapter 2.<sup>245</sup> Although there is disagreement about whether or not these polities can be detected in the archives, or whether or not the legacy of sociopolitical structures originating from mobile pastoralism is detectable at Ebla or other contemporary polities (e.g. Milano 1995: 1222-1223; Bonechi 2001), there nonetheless seems to be broad agreement that that such polities would be characterized by one or more of the following features: (1) increased prevalence of mobility (Archi 1985a, 1987, 2011; Astour 1992; Bonechi 1998; Fronzaroli

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<sup>245</sup> Although the words 'tribe' and 'tribalism' are not always encountered in Ebla studies, the use of connected terms such as 'chefs' (e.g. Archi 1987a: 42), 'scheich' (Biga 2008: 320), clans (e.g. Archi et al. 1993: 298), 'sippen' (Klengel 1988: 250), nomads/nomadism (e.g. Astour 1992: 54), seminomadism (e.g. Bonechi 2001: 60), pastoral nomadism (e.g. Milano 1995: 1222), dimorphic populations (Archi 2006a: 99), etc., demonstrates that the culturally correlated phenomena which, in Chapter 3, have been shown to be characteristic of segmentary lineage systems, have also to some degree characterized implicit understandings of this mobile pastoral 'tribalism' broadly in Ebla scholarship.

1998a; Biga 2008; Catagnoli and Fronzaroli 2010), (2a) political heterarchy (Archi 1985a, 1987a; Archi et al. 1993; Milano 1995; Fronzaroli 2003; Biga 2008) or (2b) some kind of kinship segmentation (Steinkeller 1993; Milano 1995), and (3) animal husbandry (Fronzaroli 2003; Biga 2008). Setting aside the question of whether or not segmentary lineage systems can be detected in the archive for the moment, there is nevertheless broad agreement amongst scholars of the Ebla texts that populations of mobile pastoralists must have been present in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia at the time of the archives.<sup>246</sup>

No scholars have yet brought a model of mobile pastoralism, built on explicit reference to the ethnographic record, to bear in this discussion. There is, therefore, cause for a fresh analysis undertaken with such a model to examine previous arguments and evidence for the presence of such groups and their influence, or at the very least to determine whether or not such an analysis is even feasible. In the subsections that follow, I will evaluate arguments relating to certain polities or groups thought to represent 'tribal' polities or phenomena both on their own terms but also through the application of the major cultural correlates of segmentary lineage systems identified in Chapter 3: mobility, pastoralism coupled with complementary resource extraction subsistence strategies, and an ethic of independence, with the understanding that the strongest indication of a segmentary lineage system will be in cases where all three of these features can be shown to co-occur in the absence of other features that have been shown to be anathema to such systems in Chapter 3. I will also evaluate the possibility that a mobile pastoral legacy can be detected either in the form and functioning of the Eblaite administration, or in other contemporary polities attested in the texts.

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<sup>246</sup> Two scholars would claim that this was a sociopolitical development that characterized only the end of the EBA in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia (Buccellati 1966, 1992, 2008; Pettinato 1995).

One of the most commonly cited ‘tribal’ polities in the Ebla archives is that which is indicated by the toponym MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup>.<sup>247</sup> That polity has also previously been thought to be referred to by the variant spellings MAR.TUM<sup>ki</sup> and MAR.DU<sup>ki</sup> (cf. Archi 1985a; Gelb 1987; Archi et al. 1993; Bonechi 1993). Pettinato has argued that these three spellings instead indicate three discrete political entities (1995: 233). A review of published data actually suggest the existence of two discrete political entities, one an integrated part of the Eblaite state, and the other an independent polity near or beyond the Big Bend region of the Euphrates River, against whom Ebla was once at war. Of the 52 attestations, combined, of these spellings in the Ebla corpus, MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> accounts for 36 of these instances. MAR.TUM<sup>ki</sup> is attested 14 times, while MAR.DU<sup>ki</sup> appears only twice, likely as a phonetic variant for the more common MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup>.<sup>248</sup>

The difference between MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> and MAR.TUM<sup>ki</sup> is made clear by a survey of the texts. As Pettinato has noted, MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> is attested as possessing an en<sup>249</sup>, á b b a-

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<sup>247</sup> The frequent later use of this sign combination without the place determinative in the cuneiform world as an ethnonym associated with mobile pastoral groups has undoubtedly played a role in forming this association (e.g. Archi 1985a: 8, Pettinato 1986: 258; cf. Bonechi 1993: 234). The etymological development of that ethnonym will be discussed in Chapter 8, along with Mesopotamian sources relevant to the EBA. For now, the present inquiry will be limited to the Ebla corpus and the EBA.

<sup>248</sup> Both of these attestations appear on the same (unedited and incompletely published) text, TM.75.G.1238, and record the disbursement of amounts of silver qualified as being MAR.DU<sup>ki</sup>, to two different individuals. The qualification of this silver as being from MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> would make sense in light of the fact that Ebla was involved in a military campaign against this polity at about the same time as a war against Ibal, a nearby toponym, sometime around the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Ibbi-Zikir’s tenure as vizier. The fact that the toponym is misspelled twice, on a single document, suggests that this error derives from the hand of a single scribe. The error also suggests that the writing MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> is phonetic, although it casts uncertainty on pronunciation (i.e., Martu or Mardu?).

<sup>249</sup> TM.76.G.530, obv. XI 2-6 (ARET I 5; MEE 5 10; Archi 1985a, no. 1; Pettinato 1995, no. 2), TM.76.G.521, obv. VII 22-VIII 1 (ARET VIII 521; MEE 5 1; Archi 1985a no. 25; Pettinato 1995 no. 1), TM.76.G.531, obv. VI 24-VII 2 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 7; Archi 1985a no. 29; Pettinato 1995 no. 3), TM.75.G.4256, I’ 1’-3’ (ARET XII 124; Archi 1985a no. 20; Pettinato 1995 no. 6), TM.75.G.1252, rev. VII 1-4 (Archi 1985a no. 8; Pettinato 1995 no. 4), TM.75.G.2279, obv. VIII 20-24 (Archi 1985a no. 14, Pettinato 1995 no. 5), TM.75.G.11138, III 2’-3’ (Archi 1985a no. 23; Pettinato 1995 no. 7).

ábba<sup>250</sup>, and, twice, six ugula<sup>251</sup>. Of the latter two texts, TM.75.G.1755 records a disbursement of goods to six ugula of MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> on the occasion of a trip to the temple of Kura where they swore fealty to the en of Ebla, while TM.75.G.5784+ records the terms of a treaty between Ebla and MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup>. Many texts make reference to hostilities with MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup>, including its defeat (TIL)<sup>252</sup> and occupation (TUŠ.LU×TIL)<sup>253</sup>. Together, these passages indicate that MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> was an independent polity. It had an acknowledged political leader and structure independent from that of Ebla and engaged in relations of war and peace with Ebla. MAR.TUM<sup>ki</sup>, on the other hand, is attested once as having a lugal<sup>254</sup>, and once an ugula<sup>255</sup>, but never an en or ábba. Furthermore, in TM.75.G.2377 (Archi 1979: 107-109; Archi 1985a no. 16; Pettinato 1995 no. 44)<sup>256</sup> it appears in a list of other polities, many of which can be shown to be dependent parts of the Eblaitic kingdom, as a destination along the cultic procession<sup>257</sup> of the god NIdakul.

<sup>250</sup> TM.76.G.530, obv. XI 2-6 (ARET I 5; MEE 5 10; Archi 1985a no. 1; Pettinato 1995 no. 2), TM.76.G.531, obv. VI 24-VII 2 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 7; Archi 1985a no. 29; Pettinato 1995 no. 3), TM.75.G.1252, rev. VII 1-4 (Archi 1985a no. 8, Pettinato 1995 no. 4), TM.75.G.2401, rev. III 13-15 (Archi 1985a no. 17, Pettinato 1995 no. 15).

<sup>251</sup> TM.75.G.5784+ (ARET XIII 20), TM.75.G.1755, obv. VI 13-VIII 11 (Archi 1985a no. 10; Pettinato 1995 no. 8).

<sup>252</sup> TM.76.G.524, obv. VI 4-12 (ARET VIII 524; MEE 5 4; Pettinato 1995 no. 11), TM.76.G.524, obv. XI 5-14 (ARET VIII 524; MEE 5 4; Pettinato 1995 no. 11), TM.76.G.533, obv. VI 16-22 (ARET VIII 12; MEE 5 13; Pettinato 1995 no. 12), TM.75.G.1317, obv. XI 3-rev. I 1 (Archi 1985a no. 9, Pettinato 1995 nos. 13 & 29). The relevant cases in the first three passages read: “mar-tu<sup>ki</sup> / til”. Pettinato has previously translated these lines instead as “...per (una persona di) Martu defunta...” (1996: 74).

<sup>253</sup> TM.76.G.526, obv. XIV 29 - XV 6 (ARET VIII 526; MEE 5 6; Pettinato 1995 no. 25), TM.76.G.533, rev. V 5-10 (ARET VIII 12, MEE 5 13, Archi 1985a no. 30, Pettinato 1995 no. 27).

<sup>254</sup> TM.75.G.1769, obv. VII 7-VIII 1 (MEE 7 46; Archi 1985a no. 11; Pettinato 1995 no. 35).

<sup>255</sup> TM.75.G.1895, rev. V 1-3 (Archi 1985a no. 12, Pettinato 1995 no. 36).

<sup>256</sup> TM.75.G.2379 is an identical duplicate, except for two signs.

<sup>257</sup> The last five cases of the tablet read: 1 u<sub>4</sub> mu-túm / 2 u<sub>4</sub> i-ti-bù / uru<sup>ki</sup>-uru<sup>ki</sup> / šu mu-nigin / <sup>d</sup>NIda-kul. The first day they delivered (him), the next day they set out (with him). Archi 1979: 108 has, instead, “i-ti-PUM” for i-ti-bù in rev. I 5. Here it is proposed that the verb derives from *tabā`um*, perhaps to be analyzed /yittibû/, a perfect form, or in an Akkadian preterite /itbû/, durative /itibbû/, or perfect form /ittibû/ as one expects the verb to carry an *a* vowel sound at Ebla (cf. Catagnoti 2012: 128). The verb form stands in logical and chronological sequence to the previous phrase, which suggests a perfect form. The imagery here is of a divine procession that visits each city. It is tempting to understand this list, then, as an itinerary with geographical implications.

In three texts<sup>258</sup> MAR.TUM<sup>ki</sup> is shown to host a šeš-II-ib official, a ritual office associated with the royal cult of Ebla. In TM.75.G.2490, rev. IV 12-19 (Archi 1985a no. 18, Pettinato 1995 no. 46), Ibbi-zikir is recorded as having received a shipment of wine there, possibly implying residence in that location. Together, these features indicate that MAR.TUM<sup>ki</sup> (Martum), differently from MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> (Martu), was politically and economically integrated into the Eblaite kingdom.

The nature of the ‘Martu’ polity has been the subject of much inference and assumption. In 1985, citing 36 different texts and understanding the two polities as one, Archi saw in MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> indirect confirmation “of the Sumerian tradition” of rural mobility and pastoralism reflected in the composition *The Marriage of Martu*<sup>259</sup> (1985: 8). The presence of a ‘king,’ Archi argued, should not be seen to contradict this observation as, “evidently the Eblaite, even if they knew the title used by the Amorites themselves, wanted in any case to give it the equivalent of the title of the heads of other nations” (1985: 8). Pettinato, on the other hand, citing 42 passages in 1995, argued that because there was a king and elders at MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup>, as at Ebla, it must therefore have been a sedentary kingdom with a political structure similar to that of Ebla (1995: 242). These two hypotheses, though opposed to one another in terms of their understanding of the sociopolitical character of Martu, nonetheless share an unstable foundation. Archi’s equation of the Amorites of the second millennium with MAR.TU and MAR.TUM of the Ebla texts, though previously a common assumption, will be dealt with in the following

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<sup>258</sup> TM.76.G.523, obv. VIII 10-16 (ARET VIII 523; MEE 5 3; Archi 1985a no. 26; Pettinato 1995 no. 38), TM.76.G.527, obv. XIII 16-24 (ARET VIII 7; MEE 5 7; Archi 1985a no. 28; Pettinato 1995 no. 41; Archi 1985b cites this passage as occurring in col. XII), TM.76.G.527, rev. III 12-19 (ARET VIII 7; MEE 5 7; Archi 1985a no. 28; Pettinato 1995 no. 42).

<sup>259</sup> On the relationship of this text to mobile pastoralism and its significance for segmentary lineage systems see the discussion in the following chapter.



chapter. Pettinato's declaration is more assumption than argument, and ignores the inherent limitation of the application of texts from the Eblaite corpus to the question of the sociopolitical organization of polities, especially beyond the Eblaite polity.

Significant evidence for a segmentary lineage nature to Martu, to the extent that it is reflected in the Eblaite corpus, will derive from information pertaining to the sociopolitical organization of the polity, its economic characteristics, and any indication of mobility. To the extent that the polity can be localized, its material nature might be investigated also with results following from the previous chapter, which dealt directly with the EBA archaeological record from Syria and northern Mesopotamia. Finally, though difficult to ascertain, the nature of the relationship between Martu and Ebla might also contain significant clues as to the character of its sociopolitical system. Also, as has been mentioned above, although the Ebla archives constitute a rather narrow frame within the EBA, and although many documents resist chronological assignment, the period documented by the archives was not politically static. As a result, it should not be assumed *a priori* that it was socially or culturally static, either. As has been indicated in previous chapters, the relationship between mobile pastoral and sedentary polities, at least in the modern era, has been characterized not only by specific sociopolitical features, but also by specific trajectories of sociopolitical development. That being said, the Martu corpus currently resists a systematic chronological investigation.

In terms of the political system of Martu, very little information can be gleaned from the corpus. As per Archi (1985a: 8) and Pettinato (1995: 242), the existence of an *en* at Martu does imply some sort of political hierarchy. Elders of Martu are indicated

four times, once as 12 persons<sup>260</sup>, twice as 11<sup>261</sup>, and once as 9<sup>262</sup>. Contra Pettinato, above, this concatenation of features does not necessarily suggest that Martu was structured as Ebla in miniature. One essential question, of course, is the role played by these elders. If they are to be understood as leaders of independent households, somehow united with that of the en, such a structure would not at all be contradictory to the sort of segmentation expected of a segmentary lineage system.<sup>263</sup> At the same time, it would not necessarily be diagnostic of such a structure either—segmentary lineage systems have no monopoly on segmentation. Explicit information relating to the sociopolitical character of this polity is simply lacking in the Ebla corpus.

It is also not surprising that the Ebla corpus offers little information that is clearly relevant to the question of mobility within the Martu polity. One possible indication of mobility is an argument from absence; that is to say that despite the hostilities recorded to have taken place between Martu and Ebla, including news of military defeats and the occupation of Martu's territory, and although Martu was clearly subjugated as witnessed by TM.75.G.5784+ (ARET XIII 20), it is never recorded as having been 'captured' (šu ba<sub>4</sub>-ti), as were other military targets of the Eblaite state, such as Ibal and Mari. This might be for three different reasons. First, it might simply be an accident of preservation. Martu, for all of the interest it has garnered, is not a very widely attested toponym in the archives. It is only mentioned in thirty-eight texts. It is entirely possible that an unpublished attestation of its capture has not yet been identified, or that such an attestation has simply not been preserved. Second, the war against Ebla may have been

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<sup>260</sup> TM.76.G.530, obv. XI 2-6 (ARET 1 5; MEE 5 10; Archi 1985a no. 1; Pettinato 1995 no. 2).

<sup>261</sup> TM.76.G.531, obv. VI 24-VII 2 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 7; Archi 1985a no. 29; Pettinato 1995 no. 3), and TM.75.G.2279, obv. VIII 20-24 (Archi 1985a no. 14, Pettinato 1995 no. 5).

<sup>262</sup> TM.75.G.1252, rev. VII 1-4 (Archi 1985a no. 8, Pettinato 1995 no. 4).

<sup>263</sup> See note 186, above.

lost or conceded before a point at which the ‘capture’ of Martu, presumably meaning the capture of its principle city and effective political, administrative, and ideological center, could have occurred. A third possibility, however, is that there was no centralized political center to be captured in the first place, perhaps because this polity was composed only of mobile communities. The present state of the data, however, does not allow for a discrimination between these possibilities.

The Ebla archives are more informative, unsurprisingly, regarding the economic character of the Martu polity. In this case, mentions of sheep predominate<sup>264</sup> and two poorly understood copies of a literary text may associate individuals of Martu with oxen<sup>265</sup>. Another text refers to ‘skins’ or ‘pelts’ from Martu, without specificity as to their species of origin<sup>266</sup>. Of these first six texts, four are complete. In TM.75.G.1317, obv. XI 3-rev. I 1 (Archi 1985a no. 9; Pettinato 1995 nos. 13 & 29), there are two references to a military defeat of Martu, where the capture of some of its sheep seems to follow as a logical consequence. In TM.75.G.10079, rev. XI 2-9 (Archi 1985a no. 21; Pettinato 1995 no. 30), the recipient is informed that some sheep of Martu are not stolen, but instead are only lost:

2 (Textiles) *gur-da-lum*  
     *maškim*  
 4 *a-mur-da-mu*  
     *níġ-mul-an*  
 6 *nu-zuġ*  
     *udu-udu*  
 8 *mar-tu*<sup>ki</sup>  
     *kar*

<sup>264</sup> TM.75.G.4926, I' 1'-II' 4' (ARET XII 580), TM.75.G.5784+ (ARET XIII 20), TM.75.G.1317, obv. XI 3-rev. I 1 (Archi 1985a no. 9; Pettinato 1995 nos. 13 & 29), TM.75.G.10079, rev. XI 2-9 (Archi 1985a no. 21; Pettinato 1995 no. 30), TM.75.G.10251, obv. XI 6-13 (Archi 1985a no. 22; Pettinato 1995 no. 32), and TM.75.G.16380, I 1'-3' (Archi 1985a no. 24; Pettinato 1995 no. 33).

<sup>265</sup> TM.75.G.2657+, XI 2 (ARET V 20; Pettinato 1995 no. 17) and TM.75.G.2658, XII 1 (ARET V 21, Pettinato 1995 no. 34).

<sup>266</sup> TM.75.G.10210, obv. XIII 5 (Pettinato 1995 no. 31).

(2-4) [Textiles] for Gurdalim, the maškim of Amurdamu, (5-6) for bringing news that there was no theft<sup>267</sup>—(7-9) the sheep of Martu were lost<sup>268</sup>.

In TM.75.G.10251, obv. XI 6-13 (Archi 1985a no. 22; Pettinato 1995 no. 32), an individual is recorded as delivering sheep from Martu to Ebla:

6 (1, 1, 1 textiles) *i-ri-ik-il*  
     u *g* *u* *l* *a* *ì-ra-ar*<sup>ki</sup>  
 8 *in* *u*<sub>4</sub>  
     *ì-tìl*  
 10 *mi-nu*  
     *š* *u* *-d* *u*<sub>8</sub>  
 12 *u* *d* *u* *-u* *d* *u*  
     *mar-tu*<sup>ki</sup>

(6-7) [1, 1, 1 textiles] (for) Irik-il, the ugula of Irar (8-13) on the occasion that there were brought<sup>269</sup> as many of the sheep of Martu as were taken.<sup>270</sup>

More informative than these scattered references is the central role played by sheep in TM.75.G.5784+ (ARET XIII 20), which incompletely records the details of a treaty between Martu and Ebla. This text indicates that the most important commodity from Martu, as concerned Ebla, were sheep, a percentage of which Martu was required to contribute to the king of Ebla on an annual basis. Furthermore, Martu seems to have been required to herd these sheep on behalf of the king of Ebla. It is unclear if the

<sup>267</sup> Pettinato 1995: 237 read instead *nu-du*<sub>11</sub>, which he translated, along with his understanding of the previous line, “come offerta alle divinità/ non richiesta”.

<sup>268</sup> This passage clearly indicates the technical distinction between *zu*<sub>h</sub> and *kar* that will be argued for below. The former indicates theft (not robbery), and the latter, loss without crime. If the former had the meaning of ‘robbed’ in this instance, there could be no question of confusion over the occurrence of a crime.

<sup>269</sup> In the sense of ‘delivered’. For this interpretation see Krecher 1984.

<sup>270</sup> Pettinato 1995: 238 interprets instead, “quanto/ giunse/dopo/ aver catturato/ pecore/ di Martu”. For a similar passage compare to TM.75.G.1622 IX 7-X 8 (ARET II 32): 4 *mi-at* *u* *d* *u* *-u* *d* *u* / *š* *u* *-d* *u*<sub>8</sub> / *KUR*<sup>ki</sup> / *Ḫa-za-um* / *š* *u* *ba* *4-ti* / *su-wa-si* / *u* *g* *u* *l* *a* *b* *ir-kú* *ng* *a-sù* / *mi-nu* / *IŠ*<sup>ki</sup> / *d* *e* *6-d* *e* *6*, “400 sheep / taken / (from) Kur / (that) Ḫazaum / received, / his / kunga-wrangling officer / as much as / (was in?) IŠ / he has brought.”

individual tasked with the organization of this activity is to be understood as a member of the Eblaite polity, or if he belongs to that of Martu.<sup>271</sup>

One issue that has been interpreted as having economic significance bears mentioning with relationship to Martu. This is the very commonly encountered “Martu-knife” (gír MAR.TU) in the Eblaite corpus. These are most often enumerated in lists of goods disbursed to individuals by the central administration of Ebla. Their existence has led Pettinato to assert that Martu’s economy was based not only on pastoral, but also metallurgical production (1995: 242). There are good reasons to be skeptical of this assumption. First, it is not even clear how to interpret the writing MAR.TU, in this context, let alone its connection to the polity Martu. Second, even if the object is to be associated with that polity, it is possible that it is of a form that was initially favored and popularized by it, but does not necessitate that it was a center for its production. Third, and perhaps most significantly, these objects are never recorded as originating from Martu.

In terms of the location of Martu, most commenters appeal to data outside the Eblaite corpus to establish a connection with the steppe region of Jebel Bishri south of the Big Bend region of the Euphrates River Valley in Syria. These arguments will be addressed in the following chapter. For now, it is prudent to limit analysis as much as possible to the Eblaite corpus. In the published literature, Martu can be shown to be mentioned in association with nine different toponyms, excluding Ebla. Once an individual from Martu is attested in Mari<sup>272</sup>. More commonly, individuals from other locations are noted as receiving goods from the Eblaite administration while in Martu.

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<sup>271</sup> Although a direct comparison with the situation of Nabada’s herds and its status as a dependent of Nagar requires a number of assumptions, it is tempting to draw parallels here.

<sup>272</sup> TM.75.G.2542, obv. II 6-14 (Archi 1985a no. 32, Pettinato 1995 no. 22).

This includes one person of Urlu<sup>273</sup>. Urlu's location is not known, but it appears to be a dependent polity of the Eblaite state (Bonechi 1993: 312; e.g. Catagnoli and Fronzaroli 2010: 166). Another time an individual from Urlu is recorded as being rewarded for reporting that Martu was defeated at Gudu<sup>274</sup>. Unfortunately, this toponym appears nowhere else. In TM.76.G.527, rev. XII 20-31 (ARET VIII 527; MEE 5 11; Archi 1985a no. 28; Pettinato 1995 no. 26), individuals from Hutimu, Danugu, and Ibal are all attested as receiving goods from the Eblaite administration in Martu. Additionally, in TM.75.G.1317, obv. XI 3-rev. I 1 (Archi 1985a no. 9; Pettinato 1995 nos. 13 & 29), Martu is attested to have raided the sheep of Ibal. Hutimu is a relatively well-attested city-state. Bonechi has suggested it was located south of Ebla (Bonechi 1990: 169). Danugu is not well-attested, but seems to be located amongst some regional centers belonging to the kingdom of Ebla (Bonechi 1993: 93). The location of Ibal has been the subject of wider discussion and will be considered below in greater detail—suffice it to say here that it is probably east of the Euphrates, near to the Balikh River. Twice 'occupiers' of Martu are noted, once a person from NeNiradu<sup>275</sup>, and once a person from Tuttul<sup>276</sup>. NeNiradu is not very widely attested and cannot be located more specifically than simply being somewhere near to Ebla (Bonechi 1993: 256-57). The location of Tuttul, however, is known to be modern Tell Bi'a, near the confluence of the Euphrates and Balikh Rivers. The toponym most frequently associated with Martu is Emar, known to be located at Tell Meskene near the southwestern point of the eastern bend in the Euphrates in north central Syria (Finkbeiner 1999-2000). Emar is attested as having

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<sup>273</sup> TM.76.G.524, obv. II 7-12 (ARET VIII 524; MEE 5 4; Pettinato 1995 no. 24).

<sup>274</sup> TM.76.G.524, obv. XI 5-14 (ARET VIII 524; MEE 5 4; Pettinato 1995 no. 11).

<sup>275</sup> TM.76.G.526, obv. XIV 29 - XV 6 (ARET VIII 526; MEE 5 6; Pettinato 1995 no. 25).

<sup>276</sup> TM.76.G.533, rev. V 5-10 (ARET VIII 12; MEE 5 13; Archi 1985a no. 30; Pettinato 1995 no. 27).

defeated Martu in two texts<sup>277</sup>. In the first of these, this defeat is noted to have occurred in KUR<sup>ki</sup>. KUR<sup>ki</sup> does not seem to have been a specific location or region within the Ebla corpus, but rather references the countryside, perhaps specifically a mountainous or steppe environment, counter posed to centers of sedentary, urban or agricultural life (cf. Catagnoti and Fronzaroli 2010: 15). Once, in TM.75.G.11723, obv. II 7-III 1 (Archi 1990 no. 197; Pettinato 1995 no. 16) textiles qualified as being Martu are recorded as dispatched to two different wives of the king of Emar. From evidence internal to the Eblaite corpus, then, it seems that Martu, whether a sedentary center or rural territory, was located near to Emar, Tuttul, and Ibal. The locations of two of those three toponyms are well established. From the frequency and significance of their occurrence alone, one might infer that Martu was located somewhere between Emar and Tuttul, and perhaps closer to, or at least more easily accessible from, the former. Archi has noted (1985a: 8) that the relative paucity of its mention in the Eblaite corpus, though, suggests that Martu was relatively unimportant as regards the usual highways of trade and communication during the period covered by the Ebla corpus. For this reason, it might be located outside of the Euphrates River Valley, possibly in the region of Jebel Bishri. Further discussion of its possible location along with Ibal and Manuwat will be taken up below.

The small size of the relevant corpus and the inherent limitations of the texts restricts the extent to which the sociopolitical character of the Martu polity can be reconstructed. A review of the evidence relating to the toponym Martu from the Ebla corpus suggests some features which are congruent with segmentary lineage systems. The ambiguity and ambivalence of this data, however, cannot be overstressed. The

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<sup>277</sup> TM.76.G.524, obv. VI 4-12 (ARET VIII 524; MEE 5 4; Archi 1985a no. 27; Pettinato 1995 no. 10), and TM.75.G.1317, obv. XI 3-rev. I 1 (Archi 1985a no. 9; Pettinato 1995 nos. 13 & 29).

existence of an en, far from indicating the sort of sociopolitical hierarchy evident at Ebla (contra Pettinato 1995), may simply indicate the presence of a political ‘center’ or leader, such as was the case for the Sarhadi Baluch when investigated by Salzman, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, above.<sup>278</sup> Sheep are attested as an economic product of Martu, especially from the perspective of Ebla, but this is not discriminatory evidence in and of itself speaking to the existence of a mobile polity, as comparison to Nabada demonstrates. Finally, the fact that the peace between Martu and Ebla was sealed not by an en of Martu, but by various individuals titled u g u l a, may indicate the kind of dispersed political authority expected for a segmentary political system, or it might simply reflect the dissolution of a political hierarchy there following the war—either as a political policy instituted by the conqueror or simply as a result of sociopolitical disruption. Nevertheless, the reader is reminded that although segmentation is a necessary feature of segmentary lineage systems, it is not unique to such groups and, so, is not a diagnostic feature in itself. The case of Martu, then, is ambiguous, but nevertheless not compelling as regards a mobile pastoral character or segmentary lineage system.

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<sup>278</sup> A chronological ordering of these texts might even demonstrate that these references cluster together toward the end of the period covered by the Ebla archives. For instance, three of the seven texts mentioned in the literature which contain a reference to an en of Martu also contain references to the last minister of Ebla, Ibbi-Zikir, under whose tenure the war against Martu was fought, and the peace negotiated: TM.76.G.530, obv. XI 2-6 (ARET 1 5; MEE 5 10; Archi 1985a no. 1; Pettinato 1995 no. 2), TM.76.G.521, obv. VII 22-VIII 1 (ARET VIII 521; MEE 5 1; Archi 1985a no. 25; Pettinato 1995 no. 1), and TM.76.G.531, obv. VI 24-VII 2 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 7; Archi 1985a no. 29; Pettinato 1995 no. 3). Another text, TM.75.G.4256, I’ 1’-3’ (ARET XII 124; Archi 1985a no. 20; Pettinato 1995 no. 6), is too incompletely preserved to date while three more, TM.75.G.1252, rev. VII 1-4 (Archi 1985a no. 8; Pettinato 1995 no. 4), TM.75.G.2279, obv. VIII 20-24 (Archi 1985a no. 14; Pettinato 1995 no. 5), and TM.75.G.11138, III 2’-3’ (Archi 1985a no. 23; Pettinato 1995 no. 7) remain unpublished. Nonetheless, if this chronological pattern holds, it could indicate the emergence of a position of unified political leadership within that polity only after its subjugation by the Eblaite state, perhaps as a direct or indirect consequence of that victory, a possibility with tantalizing parallels to the case of the post-segmentary lineage societies reviewed in previous chapters. Similarly, if the number of elders attested for the polity decreases over time, it might indicate increasing political consolidation.



*‘Tribal’ polities in the royal archives of Ebla: Ib-al<sup>ki</sup>*

Another candidate for a polity characterized by a segmentary lineage system in the Ebla corpus is indicated by the toponym Ibal, written *Ib-al<sup>ki</sup>* (sometimes transcribed *Ib-al<sub>6</sub><sup>ki</sup>*) (e.g. Bonechi 2001; Archi 2006a; Fronzaroli 2003; Biga 2008). From a survey of the literature, it seems that Ibal occurs in 158 published texts.<sup>279</sup> Ibal is widely understood to consist of a single polity encapsulating a large geographic area and including a number of dependent polities. Initially, the attribution of a ‘tribal’ nature to Ibal was offered as a possibility in the late 1980s. This has become generally accepted in the last decade, not due to any quantitative or qualitative change in the nature of the data available to researchers, or by advances in its interpretation, although such advances have certainly characterized the last three decades. Instead, acceptance of what I term the ‘Tribal Ibal Hypothesis’ seems to reflect a growing consensus that ‘tribal’ groups must have been present in the Ebla archives, and, being an ideal candidate on the basis of inferred characteristics of such groups, Ibal must have been one of them. Analysis of the relevant documents, with reference to segmentary lineage systems and its correlates, as they have been identified in this dissertation, suggests more nuanced possible interpretations, but, as will be shown below, is ultimately unable to overcome the inherent ambiguity that characterizes so much of the historical data derived from the Ebla corpus.

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<sup>279</sup> TM.75.G.579, v. I 5 (ARET IX 67) is likely an error for Ebla (Milano 1990: 215). Published only *en excerpto* are TM.75.G.2418 // TM.75.G.2429, obv. I 6-II 1, TM.75.G.2418 // TM.75.G.2429, obv. IV 10-16, TM.75.G.2418 // TM.75.G.2429, obv. X 1-8, and TM.75.G.2372, obv. V 15-VI 19, which are particularly relevant to hostilities which took place between Ebla and Ibal around the eighth year of Ibbi-Zikir’s tenure in the office of vizier (cf. Biga 2008). Seven other documents have also been cited by Ebla scholars but have not appeared either in fully edited form or *en excerpto*. These documents are: TM.75.G.1243, TM.75.G.1324, TM.75.G.1375, TM.75.G.1786, TM.75.G.2259, TM.75.G.2430, and TM.75.G.2496.

The hypothesis that Ibal might be considered ‘tribal’ was offered as a possible interpretation in print first in 1987 (Archi 1987a). Citing five passages on two different tablets<sup>280</sup>, Archi demonstrated the existence of at least four individuals simultaneously holding the title *en* of Ibal (1987a: 42), thus appealing to segmentation as a quality of ‘tribalism’.<sup>281</sup> Furthermore, on the basis of a list of polities in TM.76.G.530, obv. XI 7-9, ‘Ibal of the steppe’ and obv. XI 14-XII 1, ‘Ibal of the canal’<sup>282</sup> (ARET I 5; MEE 5 10), Archi argued that Ibal possessed more than a single center, some of which were, in other texts, in a clearly subservient position to the greater polity (1987: 42).<sup>283</sup> He concluded in 1987, then, on the basis of this evidence that “Cette pluralité de chefs”—by which he refers to the *ens*—“peut s’expliquer par une situation d’urbanisation partiellement achevée, ou par des clans voisins et alliés qui résident dans des centres adjacents en maintenant chacun ses institutions” (1987a: 42), thus appealing also to mobility. Archi did not, however, offer any support of the assumption that Ibal was undergoing a process of urbanization. Initially, there was not widespread support for this hypothesis. Just a few years later, Astour asserted that, though ‘nomadic tribes’ must have existed in Syria contemporaneous to creation of the archives of Ebla, they are not represented in those texts because they “did not relate to the social fabric of Ebla” (1992: 54). He described Ibal, instead, as an “extensive territorial state” that “often appears in the Ebla texts as

<sup>280</sup> On TM.75.G.1701 this includes the cases obv. I 2-10 and obv. IX 7-9. On TM.75.G.10077 this includes obv. VIII 9-11, rev. VI 15-17 and rev. XIII 3-8.

<sup>281</sup> In TM.75.G.1701, r. I 2-10 these kings are listed as: Iga-lim, Enbuš-damu, Irpeš-lim, and KAgadu, while in TM.75.G.10077 rev. XIII 3-8 they are listed as: Dubuš-damu, Iga-lim, KAgadu, and Ilum-ariḫu. The partial disparity suggests that these lists could not have been a list of kings in order of succession, but was rather a group of contemporaries. Of these, passage TM.75.G.10077, obv. VII 9-11 can probably be ignored as it seems more likely to refer to a queen of Ibal. Archi (1987a: 42) seems to imply, by inclusion of this passage in his list, that *maliktum* there is to be translated as ‘king’. The PN bearing this title, however, Mazadu, is attested elsewhere in the Eblaite corpus as a woman’s name. The translation ‘queen’ for *maliktum* is preferable in this instance.

<sup>282</sup> In ARET I, Archi suggested the reading *p a s*, which is written PAP.E, and translated ‘canal’.

<sup>283</sup> At this time he identified what he understood as “au moins deux Ibal,” that of the steppe, and that of *lasanu*.

consisting of two parts: [I]bal ‘of the steppe’ ... and [I]bal ‘of the canal’” (1992: 35). In 1993, Archi et al. returned to this hypothesis, expanding by great degree the documentation relating to the Ibalite polity (1993: 297-99). In addition to the existence of multiple kings of Ibal, they cited the existence of approximately thirty-three different individuals attested as *ugulas* of Ibal as further evidence for the unique (ostensibly segmentary) character of that polity. Archi et al. also expanded the toponymic variations and attestations of Ibal, including Ibal ‘of the steppe,’ Ibal of Daziad<sup>284</sup>, Ibal ‘of the canal’ and Ibal “della riserva d’acqua” (1993: 297-98). Additionally, Archi et al. hypothesized that a number of polities were further related to the Ibalite polity, or perhaps subservient to it, on the basis of occurrences before or after entries concerning Ibal in administrative lists (1993: 298). One toponym with a hypothesized relationship was Martu. Again, Archi et al. argued that the evidence they presented spoke to “una situazione d’urbanizzazione parziale, vale a dire con clan alleati residenti in villaggi contigui” (1993: 297-98).

After this point, the hypothesis of a tribal Ibal was widely accepted among Ebla scholars.<sup>285</sup> Some of these scholars have attempted to buttress the tribal interpretation of Ibal by marshaling less compelling evidence. Bonechi, for instance, has proposed a unique reading for the signs IB and AL, suggesting they should be understood as *sumerograms*, rather than as a phonetic spelling, with the values *ur a š-m á ħ<sup>ki</sup>*, and with the meaning “Great/Lofty Land,” referring to the region between Aleppo, Homs, and

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<sup>284</sup> This attribution is not cited in Archi et al. 1993, and to my knowledge was never mentioned again after this publication.

<sup>285</sup> E.g., Biga 2008: 320-21, who, though seemingly skeptical of a ‘tribal’ nature to the Martu polity is nonetheless accepting of Ibal’s characterization as such.

Palmyra (2001: 59-60).<sup>286</sup> Additionally, he identified onomastic traces of the *ya-* particle, thought to be associated with ethnically Amorite (and implicitly mobile pastoral) names, in personal names associated with Ibal (2001: 60). Fronzaroli, though still suggesting a phonetic reading for Ibal, nevertheless also supplied a unique etymology, understanding it as a collective term with the meaning ‘signori; abitanti’ (2003: 124). It seems prudent, for the time being, to limit conclusions about the nature of this polity and its location to social, political, economic, and geographic facts contained within the corpus before resorting to etymological arguments that, especially in a corpus containing so much ambiguous information, amount to speculation and are likely only to reinforce preconceptions and tempt one to arguments of circular logic. Instead, the discussion of Ibal here will be limited to the published texts in which the toponym appears.

In 2006, Archi returned to the Tribal Ibal Hypothesis twice. Once he simply equated the presence of multiple *ens*—this time translated “chief; king”—and *ugula* as—“overseer”—as a tribal characteristic of Ibal, but another time, while summarizing the argument to date, he nevertheless expanded it as well:

The state of Ibal was divided into a number of centers, each with its own ‘king’ (*en* = *malkum*), but also sometimes called *ugula*, in this case ‘chiefs’. There was an ‘Ibal of the steppe’, *Ib-al*<sub>6</sub><sup>ki</sup> lú EDEN, an Ibal ‘of the canal’, lú pa<sub>5</sub>, and several place-names ‘of Ibal’... A document, ARET I 5:31-37, lists first the king of Martu and his Elders, then several centers of Ibal. Martu also had up to six ‘chiefs’ (*lugal* = *ba’lum*) (at Ebla, the logogram *lugal* can alternate with *ugula*, see Archi et al. 1993:291-299).

Archi 2006a: 99-100

In this summary, Archi overstated his case. The statement seems to indicate that the title *en* is more commonly encountered at Ibal than is *ugula*, when in fact only seven different *ens* are ever attested, and no more than four simultaneously, while there are at

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<sup>286</sup> For an instance where Ibal and *ur a š-m á ħ*<sup>ki</sup> have been confused with two distinct toponyms, see Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 613.

least thirty-three u g u l a s. His statement also implies that individual e n s and u g u l a s are associated with individual centers in Ibal. This is, in fact, never the case in the texts of the Ibal corpus, except in TM.75.G.1360, obv. VI 1-11 (MEE 2 39), where the toponym *wa-za-ru<sub>x</sub>* is qualified as being l ú *ib-al<sup>ki</sup>*, ‘of Ibal,’ and is attested as having six u g u l a s. Otherwise, every mention of an e n or u g u l a of Ibal only ever associates them with Ibal generally, even when four kings are attributed to the polity as a whole, although there do appear to be only four centers of Ibal. The reference to TM.76.G.530 (ARET I 5; MEE 5 10) in the citation above serves to imply that Martu and Ibal are to be equated on the basis that Ibal follows Martu in a list of goods disbursed by the Eblaite central administration. Their relative position in this list need not imply anything other than geographic proximity, and possibly not even that. Nevertheless, this fact, along with the presence of six l u g a l at Martu, to be understood as ‘chiefs,’ justifies for Archi the opinion that the u g u l a of Ibal are to be translated as, and understood to function in the same fashion as these ‘chiefs’ of Martu, despite, among other things, the choice made by the scribe to indicate one group of individuals as u g u l a s and the other as l u g a l s. In fact, Archi, in the above passage from 2006, still makes the error of conflating MAR.TU<sup>ki</sup> with MAR.TUM<sup>ki</sup>. To the former is never attributed a l u g a l, while the latter is attributed one of each<sup>287</sup>. Archi's opinion that the terms l u g a l and u g u l a can alternate freely is informed by the same conflation and consequently undermined by their discrete occurrences.

Given the widespread acceptance of the Tribal Ibal Hypothesis prevalent in the literature for the past two decades, the lack of any re-analysis of the data since that time

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<sup>287</sup> TM.75.G.1769, obv. VII 7-VIII 1 (MEE 7 46; Archi 1985a no. 11; Pettinato 1995 no. 35) and TM.75.G.1895, rev. V 1-3 (Archi 1985a no. 12; Pettinato 1995 no. 36).

despite the growth of the size of the relevant corpus and the refinement of our understanding of those texts, it is argued here that a review of the data is warranted, especially in light of the original, ethnohistorically-derived sociopolitical model of mobile pastoralism that has been developed in this dissertation. This review will demonstrate that although a ‘tribal’ hypothesis is one possible interpretation of the data, it is not the most compelling. At the same time, any conclusions are tempered by the limitations of the texts themselves.

A preponderance of evidence suggests that Ibal can be characterized as having a segmentary political structure. As mentioned in passing, above, Ibal appears, in some cases, further defined as being either ‘of the steppe’ or ‘of the canal’. The qualification *lú edin*, ‘of the steppe,’ appears seven times<sup>288</sup>, whereas the qualification *lú PA<sub>4</sub>.A*, ‘of the canal’ (cf. Conti 1990: 170-72) appears twice in cited or published texts<sup>289</sup>. These terms are usually understood to indicate different parts of a single Ibalite polity (cf. Astour 1992: 34; Bonechi 2001: 61-62; Archi 2006: 99-100).<sup>290</sup> In fact, they appear to subdivide that polity, apparently on a geographical basis, into four constituent parts. In the texts ARET I 5 and 10, the following progression of toponyms relative to Ibal is

<sup>288</sup> TM.76.G.530, obv. XI 7-9 (ARET I 5; MEE 5 10), TM.75.G.1828, rev. X 1’-7’ (ARET I 7; MEE 10 14, where it is cited as occurring in rev. IV 21’-27’), TM.75.G.1255, rev. IV 23-V 4 (ARET IV 1), TM.75.G.1286, obv. VI 1-3 (ARET IV 9), TM.76.G.527, rev. VIII 14-IX 2 (ARET VIII 527; MEE 5 7, where it is cited as occurring in col. XXIV 14-XXV 2), TM.76.G.531, obv. VII 8-10 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 11; Pettinato 1995 no. 3), and TM.75.G. 10117, rev. I 8-II 4 (ARET XVI 7).

<sup>289</sup> TM.76.G.530, obv. XI 14-XII 1 (ARET I 5; MEE 5 10) and possibly TM.76.G.531, obv. VII 15-17 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 11), a nearly parallel text.

<sup>290</sup> One difficult passage which might indicate a further qualification of Ibal appears in TM.75.G.1933, obv. VI 5-VII 7 (ARET IV 24; MEE 10 30). There, at least seven individuals are recorded as receiving garments from the Eblaite administration. This list is followed by two cases which can be interpreted as “Ibal (of) A.TUKU”. There are two difficulties with this reading. The first is that the garments in this passage are disbursed in multiples of nine, though it is followed by seven PNs and two GNs. These last two cases, then, would make more sense as PNs. They would, however, be unique in the corpus as GNs. Conti has suggested, despite this difficulty, that A.TUKU should be understood to have the meaning “una riserva d’acqua”, as it is glossed in the bilingual lists with the Eblaite *a-a-ù-mi*, which he analyzed as /ḥawā<sup>3</sup>u mī/, and should be understood in this case to be synonymous with PA<sub>4</sub>.A (1990: 170).

recorded: Ibal lú edin, Išdau, Dau, Ibal lú PA<sub>4</sub>.A, Lasan, Dau-II, and Wazaru. In other words, “Ibal of the steppe: (being) Išdau (and) Dau. Ibal of the canal: (being) Lasan, Dau again, (and) Wazaru.” Thus, the four parts of the Ibalite polity are Išdau, Dau, Lasan, and Wazaru. It is tempting to assume that this fact accounts for the four simultaneous ens attested for Ibal in two separate texts. In any event, Ibal seems to have been some sort of segmentary polity. One on level it seems to have acted as a unified political whole, but the scribes of Ebla nonetheless documented four primary internal divisions. The only text to originate ‘within’ Ibal, so to speak, uses a different title altogether. TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11), a chancellery text, is a copy of a letter sent by the ‘maḥ-maḥ’ (in Sumerian, literally ‘great ones’, perhaps ‘premiers’) of Ibal to the king of Manuwat, which seems to record Iga-lim as acting on behalf of Ibal in an official capacity. The origin of this letter within the Ibalite polity offers yet another title, and suggests its equation with either en, uḡula, or both.<sup>291</sup> Segmentation, of course, is one cultural correlate of segmentary lineage systems. Nevertheless, it is not unique to it and in light of the treatment of the EBA Syrian sociopolitical system offered above, it is perhaps more likely that Ibal was composed of four primary households, all ‘yoked’<sup>292</sup> together into a single polity, on more or less equal terms, without a single household dominating the others. The large number of uḡulas, multiple contemporaneous ens, and the use of a third title to refer to these leaders, along with the lack of mention of any ‘elders’ of the polity, seems to indicate a sociopolitical structure distinct from Ebla, but not necessarily a segmentary lineage structure. It is apparently the presumption of such a structure that lies

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<sup>291</sup> The same word may be used in a similar sense in TM.75.G.309 obv. I 1-rev. II 2 (Archi 1979: 111-112, Archi 1985a no. 5, Pettinato 1995 no. 21), which can be interpreted variously, possibly as a list of prisoners. There, twenty-eight individuals listed as ‘great’ people and another 54 people are ‘taken’ by Ibal.

<sup>292</sup> On the significance of this term, see the excursus following this chapter.

behind the conviction that Ibal is “in via di sedentarizzazione” (Fronzaroli 2003: 126).

There is no explicit evidence in the corpus relating to Ibal to support the hypothesis that this polity was a mobile one, although no clear evidence exists that would refute it, either.

Unlike the case with Martu, there is very little information in the Ebla texts relating to the economic nature of Ibal, despite its more common appearance. Only six texts record information concerning economic production in Ibal. Four of these relate to livestock. Of these four, two mention sheep. TM.75.G. 10117, rev. I 8-II 4 (ARET XVI 7) records that the sheep of Ibal “of the steppe” are reported to have been raided by Martu. In TM.75.G.1323, obv. VII 12-19 (ARET I 14; MEE 2 20), a consignment of garments is given to an individual from Ibal for the purchase of two sheep. The other two texts mention a consignment of textiles and wool, respectively, for four oxen and seven oxen<sup>293</sup>. The two other texts mention consignments for wine<sup>294</sup>, and one seems to include specifically grapes<sup>295</sup>. Although these economic characteristics are potentially consistent with a segmentary lineage system, they are by no means exclusive to such an interpretation, and they constitute too paltry a corpus to come to any real conclusion regarding the economic nature of Ibal or of its parts. It does suggest, though, a location for some part of this polity in an area suitable for the raising of oxen and viticulture.

The location of Ibal has been the subject of much discussion and vacillating opinions. In 1981 Archi suggested a location in the Diyala (cf. Whiting 1976; see also Owen 1981: 66 and Hallo 1981: 70), on the basis of an equation with an *a-wa-al* from the Sargonic period (Edzard, Farber, and Sollberger 1977: 20), and *e-ba-al* from the Ur III period (Edzard and Farber 1974: 38). In 1985, however, he argued for a southeastern

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<sup>293</sup> TM.75.G.1369, obv. II 4-7 (ARET IV 12) and TM.75.G.1329, obv. I 1-14 (MEE 2 33), respectively.

<sup>294</sup> TM.75.G.2508, obv. VI 31-42 (MEE 12 37).

<sup>295</sup> TM.75.G.3630, obv. VII 1'-7' (ARET III 562).



location, in the Syrian steppe east of Qatna, southeast of Ebla. This argument was made on the basis of the co-occurrence of Ibal near Arḥadu in texts of ARET I, identified with *A-ra-ah/ḥa-ti*, “una città attestant nel II millennia e che è da situ are tea Nija e Qatna,” Šuragaru, an “unico personaggio ricordato per nome e senza alcun riderimento ad un centro urbano in quest elenco di città... Sembra evidence come quest personaggio sia il cap di un gruppo tribal... È molt plausibile che il riferimento sia alla regione ad oriente di Qatna,” and the toponym Abzu, “certemente non può essere dissociate da <sup>uru</sup>*Ab-zu-(ja)*, che Suppiluliuma I menziona nel trattato con Šattiwaza, e che va cercata presso Kinza” (1985b: 221). On the basis of TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13), however, and its interaction with the polities of Mari and Manuwat, Archi et al., in 1988, stated that Ibal must be located in “north-eastern (!) Syria” (1988: 217), a position that will be referred to here as the eastern hypothesis. In 1990, though, Archi reverted to the southern hypothesis on the basis of Ibal’s apparent association with Kablul and Adu (1990a: 21-22). Although originally also arguing for the placement of Ebal in the area of Nuzi (Astour 1987: 8), Astour in 1992, on the equation of Enna-Dagan’s letter with text TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13), appealed to the eastern hypothesis, arguing for a connection between Burman, Gasur, and Ebal, on the observation that Šada and Arišum appeared to change ownership between these three countries. Equating the Šada of the Ebla archives with one mentioned in a list of places annexed by Tukulti-Ninurta north-east of the Big Bend of the Euphrates in Syria, Astour argued that “Burman, Gasur and Ebal were all three located on the left bank of the Euphrates near its great bend, and... they formed a triangle in which Burman abutted Gasur in the south and on the hinterland of Ebal in the east” (1992: 33-34). A suggested equation of Manuwat with the second

millennium toponym Manuḥat, known from the Mari texts, seemed to him to confirm this hypothesis (1992: 36-37). On the basis of Ibal's occasional qualification "of the steppe" and "of the canal" he suggested a location near Qal'at Ḡabar, at Tell Frayy (1992: 34). In 1993, Archi et al. again attempted to buttress the southern hypothesis through the observation of the association of the god Kamiš with Ibal and "un fenomeno 'amorreo'... anche se esso è in general non ignoto al corpus onomastic eblaita," a *ya-* to *yi-* alternation in some personal names associated with Ibal (1993: 298-99). Bonechi, in 1993, generally agreed with the southern hypothesis, and further suggested that, on the basis of TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13), Ibal, along with Manuwat and Mari, were probably situated on commercial routes joining the region of Qatna with the area of the middle Euphrates between Tuttul and Terqa, via Palmyra, routes that are known to have existed during the second millennium (1993: 187-88).

Although scholars have appealed to other arguments, the only good means of discriminating between the southern and eastern hypotheses is through the association of Ibal with other toponyms that can be more or less reliably located, especially as much as possible on the basis of EBA evidence alone. The observation that Ibal might be associated with a steppe environment, or be associated with certain onomastic features, is hardly enough to discriminate between many possible regions in Syria. To this end, the relevant texts of the Ibal corpus can be surveyed with respect to two kinds of geographical associations, (1) those that show direct interactions between Ibal and other polities in both bureaucratic and chancellery texts, and (2) inferences drawn from toponyms that appear listed near Ibal in bureaucratic texts. Of these two types of associations, the former are likely to be more important, as the latter can be influenced by

many different factors other than geographical proximity, except in such cases where those appearances occur in specific groups or patterns.

Ibal is recorded in some sort of association with fifteen distinct toponyms.<sup>296</sup> With the exceptions of one attestation each of Garaman, Ilwium, and Manuwat, all of these associations stem from just two chancellery texts.<sup>297</sup> TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11) is a letter sent from Ibal to the king of Manuwat, while TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13) seems to recount military actions taken by an unnamed leader from Ibal. Considering first the toponyms of TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11), Damu, Galamu, Manuwat, NIrar, and Šulanu are possibly in the region of Ibal. Of these, Damu is rarely attested, though a group with this appellation is discussed, below. Galamu might be equated with Garamu, possibly located somewhere on the upper Syrian Euphrates (Bonechi 1993: 152), and is said to be in the hand of the king of Ebla in the Abarsal Treaty, TM.75.G.2420 (ARET XIII 5). Despite its numerous attestations and apparent importance in the Ebla archives, the location of Manuwat, like Ibal, is not clear. Fronzaroli has suggested that it should “Perhaps be identified with Menua..., mentioned by Gudea and localized in the area of the Euphrates” (1984-1986: 144). Archi et al. (1988), again on the basis of TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13), placed Manuwat in northeastern Syria (1988: 271). A map published by Astour in 1989 placed Manuwat tentatively east of Ebla, in the steppe south of the Jabbul Lake (1989: 154). Bonechi has suggested that it should be found along a route between Carchemish and Hama, on the basis that it was a wine-producing

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<sup>296</sup> These are, in TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13): Abzu, Busa, Damad, Gakam Garaman, Harbatum, Išla, Ilwium, Manuwat, Mari, NIrar, and Šadapan; in TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11): Damu, Galamu, Manuwat again, NIrar again, and Šulanu, in TM.75.G.1369, rev. I 12 (ARET IV 12), Ilwium again; in TM.75.G.5882+, rev. III’ 11’ (ARET XII 1287), Manuwat for the third time; and in TM.75.G.1789, obv. XI 9 (MEE 10 3), Garaman again.

<sup>297</sup> This fact illustrates that, even with such a large corpus, the nature of the Ebla archives is such that even one or two texts can profoundly influence our understanding of a toponym.

center (1991: 70). Along with ‘Amorite’ onomastic features, he argued that this might place Manuwat somewhere south of Ebla, between it and Ibal (1991: 73). In 1992, Astour argued that it might be identified with Manuḥatan known from Mari texts of the second millennium, and located on the left bank of the river, between 70 and 95 kilometers east of Emar (1992: 36). The location of Manuwat seems to be inextricably bound with that of Ibal, especially on the basis of their co-occurrence in TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13) and TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11). The possible equation of Manuwat with Menua and Manuḥatan, suggested by Fronzaroli, can be complemented with the appearance of Umanum, the mountain of Menua in Gudea’s inscription<sup>298</sup>, with a mountain called *ḥu-ma-nam* in the Old Assyrian Sargon Legend (Kt j/k 97, l. 47-50):

47   ... / *ḥu-ma-nam*  
       *a-ší-ni-šu / am-ḥa-šu-ma / ki-ma*  
 49   *sí-ki-tim / i-ba-ri-šu-nu / ṣa-al-mì*  
       *ú-ša-zi-iz / ...*

(47-48) I cleft mount Ḥumanum in two and, like (49) a ‘peg’<sup>299</sup>, in its midst I set up my statue.<sup>300</sup>

Based on the imagery of a broken mountain, and on the basis of Gudea’s opposition of Umanum of Manuwat and Basalla of MAR.TU, it is possible that reference is made in both of these instances to the narrowing of the Euphrates Valley at Halabiya, owing to the outcroppings of basalt into the valley there. Such a location is an obvious landmark on the Euphrates and was clearly of military significance in the Roman period and would

<sup>298</sup> This text will be treated in greater detail in the following chapter.

<sup>299</sup> Van De Mieroop (2000: 154 n101) took this as a variant of *sikkātum*. Alster and Oshima (2007: 15) stated that it is “derived from sikkatu A ‘peg’.” It is here simply in the singular. This is the only OA usage of this noun in the singular known to me.

<sup>300</sup> Hecker (2001) instead translated, “The Amanus mountains I broke into two parts...”. Dercksen (2005: 114) refused to identify Ḥu-ma-nam with the Amanus mountains, because of the initial writing Ḥu- which would be unprecedented for this GN. Instead, he proposed it is either a town or a deified mountain, Ḥumanum. Dercksen (2005:109) translated then, “I divided the Humānum mountain in two parts and erected my statue between them as a (marking) stake.”

have been as well in EBA contexts. This would also imply that Manuwat and Martu sat opposite from one another, Martu on the right bank of the Euphrates and Manuwat on the left. Nlrrar is also rather well-attested. Like Garamu, Nlrrar is one of the cites listed in the Abarsal treaty as being in the hand of the king of Ebla. On the basis of its occurrence with Kakmium in ARET I 1-9, Archi located it in the Khabur (1990a: 22). In 1993, however, Archi et al. argued that it must be in the close vicinity of Ebla, on the basis of frequent alimentary consignments and its association with Mašadu, another place near to Ebla (1993: 409). Šulanu, is a not attested elsewhere. On the basis of TM.75.G.12137+ (ARET XIII 10) and TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11), Pettinato has suggested that it should be understood as Šuranu, and located in the Euphrates Valley. TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11), then, paints a somewhat ambiguous geographic picture. Polities involved include Nlrrar, seemingly in the immediate vicinity of Ebla, but others are more probably to be located in the vicinity of the Euphrates River in Syria.

More toponyms are found in TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13), which records the military activities of a leader of the Ibalite polity. These include Abzu, Busa, Damad, Gakam, Garaman, Ḥarbatum, Išla, Manuwat again, Mari, Nlrrar again, and Šadapan. As mentioned above, Archi (1985b: 221) associated the Abzu of this text with that attested in Suppiluliuma I's treaty with Šattiwaza, near to Homs. Pomponio equated Abzu with Abazu (1988: 318), a location near Ebla (Bonechi 1993: 11). Archi et al., in 1993, suggested a location for Abzu at modern Tell Afis (147), 11 km northwest of Ebla. Fronzaroli suggested, however, on the basis of TM.75.G.2290 and an attestation in TM.75.G.3505 (ARET III 441) of an individual from Abzu in Garaman, that it must rather be found in the region of Ibal (which he places in the vicinity of Homs), and not at

Tell Afis (2003: 141-42). None of these arguments are decisive. Busa is a rarely attested, small center. Damad is also not well-attested in the Ebla corpus. Archi equated it with a similar sounding toponym known from Mari (1982: 319). Gakam, also rarely attested, has been hypothesized to be south of Ebla, but only on the basis of its association with Ibal and Manuwat, and their assumed location in that vicinity (Bonechi 1991b: 6). There is some consensus, however, on the location of Garaman. Bonechi suggested, on the basis of its association with the god Kamiš, that it is to be located on the Upper Orontes (1991: 71). Fronzaroli pointed out two texts<sup>301</sup> in which that location is known to host property owned by Ibrium's family (2003: 140). Bonechi suggested that Ḫarbatum may be a part of the kingdom of Ebla on the basis that no king is attested, and a son of the king of Ebla is recorded as being in residence there (1993: 175). Archi et al., however, cited an instance where a king of this location is attested and note that, despite ownership of some land there by an individual known at Ebla, this is a phenomenon also attested for polities located at some distance from the city (1993: 270). In fact, ARET X 100<sup>302</sup> seems to record a war against Ḫarbatum in the latter years of the archive, proving its status as an independent polity. Pettinato suggested the possible association of this toponym with Arpad of the second millennium (1979a: XXXII n. 128), probably modern Tell Rifa'at, 40 km north of Aleppo (Klengel 1970: 82 apud Pettinato 1979a: XXXII n. 128). Ilwium in this text might be identifiable with the toponym IlwiNI, attested somewhere on the middle Euphrates (Bonechi 1993: 200). Išla is unique here. Šadapan is also unique, but is possibly an alternate spelling for the toponym *ša-dab*<sub>6</sub>, which is relatively well attested and associated with Emar (Bonechi 1993: 121). It also appears

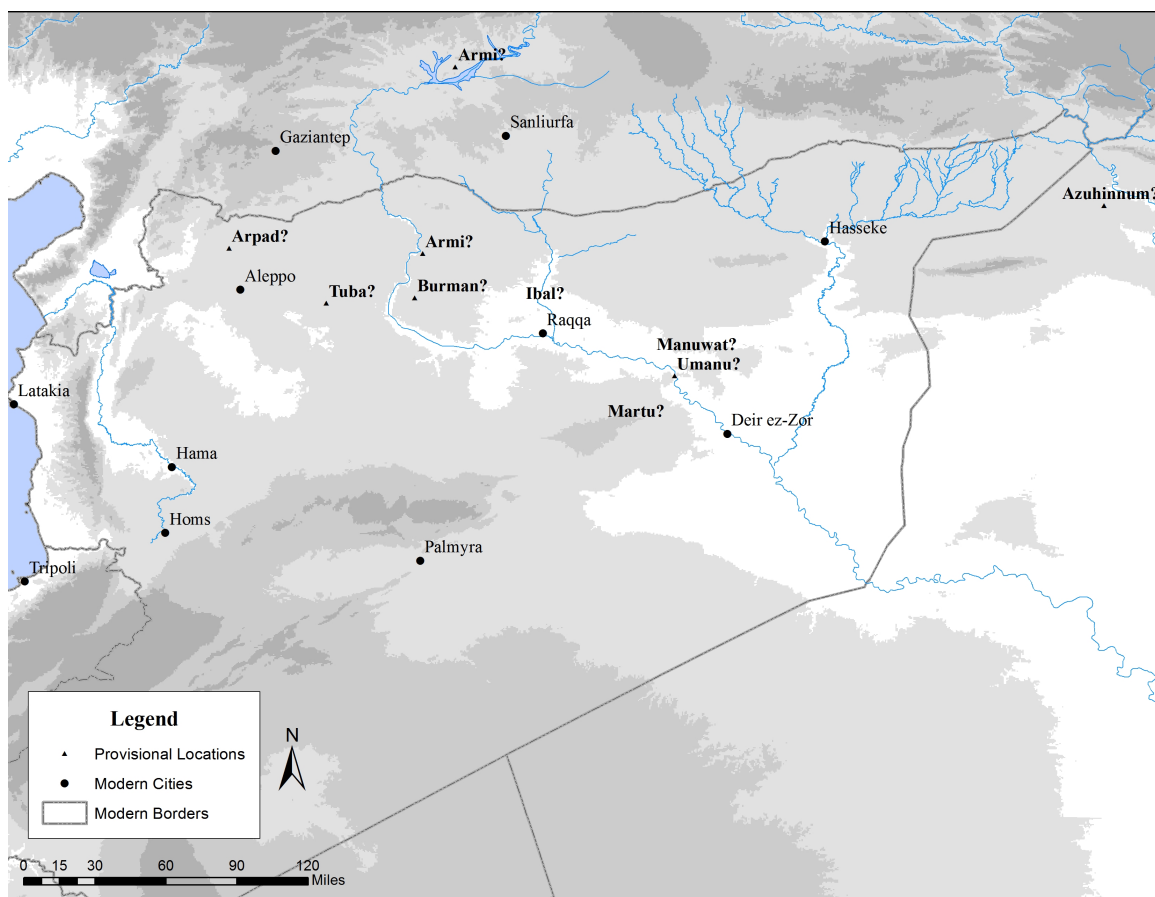
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<sup>301</sup> TM.75.G.1444 and TM.75.G2514 (ARET VII 155).

<sup>302</sup> This ARET volume is presently unpublished.

twice in the letter of Enna-Dagan, in relation to Burman and Gašur. Fronzaroli pointed out it might be identifiable with the middle-Babylonian Šatappi attested in the Emar texts (2003: 138). It is most likely to be found in the Big Bend region of the Syrian Euphrates. In TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13), then, there is evidence of military activities taking place almost certainly in the Euphrates Valley and possibly also north of Ebla. Together, then, the activities mentioned in TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11) and TM.75.G.2290 (ARET XIII 13) exhibit toponyms that are almost exclusively to be located along the Euphrates, east and west of the Balikh, and perhaps extending westward across the Euphrates toward Aleppo.

An analysis of surrounding toponyms in administrative texts largely reinforces associations made on the basis of TM.75.G.1626 and TM.75.G.2290. Five times, Ibal appears in close vicinity to Arḫadu, four times with Manuwat and Dulu, thrice with Kakmium twice with Adaddu, Garaman, Ḫarran, and Nīrar. Together with the instances mentioned above, the reappearances of Manuwat, Garaman, and Nīrar seem to reinforce the probability of a geographical relationship between these polities and Ibal. As mentioned already, Archi (1985b: 221) connected Arḫadu with a second millennium toponym located east of Homs. Bonechi agreed with this location, but only on the basis of an onomastic connection with Ibal, Martu, and Ḫutimu, and on the assumption that these toponyms are to be found in the south as well (1991: 71). Fronzaroli disagreed, noting the frequent association of Arḫadu with Dulu, which he located between Uršum and Ḫarran (1984-1986: 140). The location of Dulu, though, has been debated. On the basis of the pattern of its appearance in the first nine documents of ARET I, following Ursaum/Uršum and preceding Iritum and Ḫarran, Archi suggested it must be found in



**Figure 7.2. Provisional locations of some Ebla text toponyms**

northern Syria (1985b: 221). Astour argued, on the basis of a serpent conjuration spell from the Eblaite corpus (TM.75.G.2038), that because “the Earth and the deified river Baliḥ are the first to be invoked to rid the fields of Dulu from a plague of snakes,” it must then be “located on that river, and probably at its source” (1988: 145; cf. Pettinato 1979b: 344-45 and Krebern timer 1984: 130-144). Recently, Biga and Otto have suggested on the basis of the presence of a *badālum* at Dulu—a high political office that seems to be unique in its appearance in toponyms northeast of Ebla—that Arḥadu should be sought somewhere around Ḥarran, along with Ursaum/Uršum, Utigu, Iritum, Sanapzugum, Gudadanum, Sarḥu, and Ḥutimu (2010: 484). While none of these are as well attested as



Arḥadu in the proximity of Ibal in administrative lists, all are attested, especially Ḥarran, Ḥutimu, Dulu, and Iritum. Very recently, Biga has argued that Dulu might possibly be read Gublu, and be equated with Byblos: “It seem highly improbable that the kingdom of Ebla did not have any relationship with Byblos... there is no better candidate for Byblos in the Ebla texts than DUlu” (2014b: 97). Dulu is a reliable source of woolen textiles and often objects of precious stone in the mu-DU texts (ibid). Kakmium is another schizophrenic toponym. On the basis of an equation with an Old Babylonian toponym, Kakmum (cf. Groneberg 1980: 129), it has been located in the northwestern Zagros Mountains (Pettinato 1980: 16; cf. Röllig 1976-1980: 289), even beyond the Tigris. On the basis of mentions alongside Kiš, Adu, and Nagar, Archi has located Kakmium east of the Euphrates (1985b: 220) and, appealing to the Old Babylonian Kakmum, perhaps beyond the Tigris (Archi 1984: 232-33), but at least beyond the Khabur (1984: 240-41, 1990: 22). Archi and Biga, had, elsewhere, expressed doubts on the equation of the two toponyms (1982: 327) and Sollberger rejected it altogether (1986: 46). Astour, however, suggested a more specific location southwest of Erbil, on or near the plain of Qarağ on the basis of Old Babylonian and Mari texts which seemed to connect it somehow with an area upstream from Ekallatum (1987: 8-11). Bonechi and Catagnoti have argued, on the basis of the Abarsal Treaty, and onomastic similarities between Ebla and Kakmium, and also the very common occurrence of Kakmium in the Ebla corpus, that the latter should be located not east of the Euphrates, but somewhere in the vicinity of the former, perhaps near to Karkamiš (1990: 23-24). Archi has since described Kakmium, in passing, as being “situated probably in a region to the north-west,” which is to say, west of the Euphrates but north of Ebla (1990b: 53). A preponderance of evidence does seem to

suggest that a location east of the Khabur is unlikely. This toponym is most likely to found somewhere between the Jebel 'Abd el-Aziz and Aleppo, perhaps north of that line. It is not possible to locate Adadu any more precisely than somewhere in the region of Ibal, as it is attested in TM.76.G.531, obv. VII 20-27 (ARET VIII 531, MEE 5 11). It is also possible that another Adadu existed in the region of Ebla (cf. Bonechi 1993: 18). If the toponym NIdadum is to be connected with some attestations of Adadu (cf. Milano 1984: 216), such a duplication of toponyms would seem even more likely. The location of Ḥarran can be fixed with some certainty to the modern village of the same name near Altınbaşak in Turkey, some 44 kilometers southeast of Şanlıurfa. The location of Armi(um), the subject of military activity near the end of the period covered by the Ebla archives, continues to be the subject of disagreement. The equation of Armi(um) of the Ebla texts with Armanum, known from Sargonic inscriptions (see the following chapter) and later periods (cf. Fronzaroli 1977: 148-49, Archi 1982: 318, and Archi 1987b: 135), has been widely accepted. Sollberger has argued on the basis of Aleppo's otherwise apparent absence in the Ebla corpus that Armanum must be equated with it and its region (1986: 40). This assumption has been more controversial. Archi, for instance, has stated that "the identification of Armanum with Aleppo..., is based solely on the fact that some scholars want to attribute to Aleppo (not mentioned in texts of the third millennium) the same importance which it enjoyed in subsequent epochs" (1987b: 135). Bonechi (1990: 33) and Lambert (1990), however, have independently argued that the Eblaite toponym Ḥalam, a dependent polity of Ebla with a temple of Haddad, should be connected to Aleppo. Noting that early commentators seemed to agree that Armi(um) was to be found in a region near to Ebla, Bonechi expressed surprise at what he interpreted to be an

onomastic distinction between the two toponyms (1990: 22), detecting possible Anatolian influences, leading him to suggest that they may not be particularly near to one another (1990: 25). He argued that Armi(um) could not be found north or east of Ebla, as it does not appear in the first nine texts of ARET I, is not mentioned in the letter of Enna-Dagan, nor in the treaty with Abarsal, yet retains many Semitic onomastic characteristics (1990: 34). He suggested, then, that it should be found to the northwest, toward the Amanus Mountains, in Cilicia, in the Plain of Antioch, or perhaps even southwest, in the mountains of Lebanon (1990: 34-36; see also Diakonoff 1990: 12). More recently, Adelheid Otto, one of the excavators of Tell Bazi, a site on the left bank of the Euphrates River in the embayment above the hydroelectric dam at Tishreen, has suggested that EBA Armium is very possibly to be located there. Otto's argument is based in large part on the text of UET I 175<sup>303</sup>, an Old Babylonian copy of a famous Old Akkadian inscription excavated at Ur, which is recorded as having come from a statue of Naram-Sin erected in the temple of Sîn at Ur. This inscription commemorates a victory won by the Akkadian king over "Armanum and Ebla," and seemingly provides a physical description of the citadel of Armanum:

(col. iv 20-col. vi 17): From the fortification wall to the great wall: 130 cubits is the height of the hill (and) 44 cubits is the height of the wall. From the quay wall to the fortification wall: 180 cubits is the height of the hill (and) 30 cubits is the height of the wall. Total: 404 cubits in height, from ground (level) to the top of the wall. He undermined the city Armanum<sup>304</sup>... From the river to the quay wall: 196 cubits is the height of the hill (and) 20 cubits is the height of the wall. From the quay wall to the fortification wall: 156 cubits is the height of the hill (and) 30 cubits is the height of the wall.

Frayne 1993: 135

<sup>303</sup> For a full bibliography of editions of this text see Frayne 1993: 132.

<sup>304</sup> The inscription, as copied on the tablet, actually has here *si-ku-ma-num*. The majority of scholars, however, take this as an error for *ar-ma-num*, which appears five times previously in the text.

Although there are some problems with the mathematical calculations in the inscription, Otto demonstrates that it could plausibly refer to the situation of Tell Bazi, located on a spur of the Jezireh plateau, intruding into an embayment within the Euphrates River Valley, where a series of walls and part of a large EBA gate complex were encountered in 2004 (2006: 7). For Otto, further evidence in support of this identification comes from the absence of any other plausible EBA candidate site fitting this description (ibid). Otto further justified an eastern location for Armanum on epigraphic grounds. First, the basis of the order in which places are recorded in Naram-Sin's campaign: "first Armanum, then Ebla, and then further west to Amanus, the Cedar Mountain, and the Upper Sea," (2006: 13). Second, Armanum and Ebla are recorded as having been conquered through the agency of Dagan, who is associated with the Euphrates Valley, while Nergal was associated with the Amanus and the Syrian coast, again suggesting the association of Armanum with the eastern part of this campaign (2006: 13). Furthermore, she noted that Armi is frequently mentioned in relationship to trips to and from Nagar, modern Tell Brak and posited that the area around Tell Bazi is the only likely crossing point north of Emar and south of Carchemish and a logical stop on a direct route to Tell Brak (2006: 21). In arguing for an eastern location she also had to account for the particular problems noted by Bonechi. She explained Armanum's absence in Enna-Dagan's letter by arguing that it would have been beyond the northern frontier of the region of interest to an early war between Ebla and Mari (2006: 19). She explained its absence from the Abarsal Treaty by arguing that the Euphrates may have formed the boundary between the two countries and, as such, Armanum, on the left bank, was omitted from the lists of countries in the sphere of Eblaite influence (2006: 19). Noting Bonechi's proposed onomastic

connection between Armanum and Dulu, she further buttressed an eastern location by arguing that Dulu must be found in the east, owing to its appearance in the texts of ARET I 1 and 3-7. Its association there with Ḫarran, Ursaum/Uršum, Utigu, and Iritum, cities in the *badālum* area, but nevertheless with the attestation of an *en* in Dulu, together suggested to Otto that this city is to be found southwest of Ḫarran, between the Euphrates and Balikh, and just east of Armanum (2006: 19). Finally, she explained the absence of Armi in the texts of ARET I 1-9 by arguing for historical contingency: these texts are likely to date from the latter years of Ibbi-Zikir's tenure in the office of vizier, a time at which hostilities between Ebla and Armi are known to have occurred. Therefore, it is very possible, if not likely, that at the time these texts were composed Armi was a dependent polity of the Eblaite kingdom, without an independent king (2006: 20-22). Recently, however, Archi has argued for an identification further upstream, in Turkey, at Samsat. He based this argument on the association of Armanum with other toponyms located north of Carchemish and the identification of Anatolian onomastic traditions there: "If Armi were to be found at Banat-Bazi, it would have represented an anomaly within an otherwise homogenous linguistic scenario" (Archi 2011: 27). In fact, Banat-Bazi is not far south of a line drawn between Ḫarran and Tell Chuera. It is not entirely accurate to state that such a location would constitute linguistic anomaly—rather, it is onomastic. Nevertheless, whether a linguistic or onomastic anomaly, some historical contingency might easily account for a culturally or linguistically anomalous nature, perhaps relating to a strategically and economically significant location on the Euphrates River. To Archi, however, the only site which seems to fit the description given in UET I 175, then, would be Samsat, "the most impressive tell on the Euphrates north of Mari"

(2011: 30). The location of Armanum that far north, as at Tell Bazi, would still solve the problems that Bonechi identified, and which were addressed by Otto.<sup>305</sup> In any event, whether at Tell Bazi or Samsat, it seems clear that Armanum/Armi(um) of the Ebla texts must be found on the Euphrates, northeast of Ebla. Ḥassuwan seems to be well attested, appearing also in Sargonic, Ur III, Hittite, and Old Babylonian texts. It appears, notably, in both the treaty with Abarsal (TM.75.G.2420: ARET XIII 5) and the Enna-Dagan Letter (TM.75.G.2367: ARET XIII 4). Although its location has not been precisely established, it can be fairly securely located somewhere to the north of Ebla. In 1971, Astour, on the basis of “both archaeological and geographical grounds,” which he declined to provide, equated Ḥassuwan with Tilmen Hüyük (1971: 14), just over two miles east of Islahiya in Gaziantep province, Turkey. In 1980 (48-49), Fronzaroli suggested that the writings *ḥa-zu-wa-an* and *ḥa-su-wa-an* might be different toponyms, the former to be equated with the Hittite toponym <sup>uru</sup>*ḥa-aš-šu-wa-aš*, located in the area of the Euphrates, north of Carchemish, on the right bank (see del Monte and Tischler 1978: 97), while the latter, mentioned along with Kakmium and Nīrar, was to be found in, or east of, the Khabur (1980: 48-49; 1984-1986: 142-43). In 1986, Pettinato located Ḥassuwan between the Balikh and Khabur, apparently partly as a result of his interpretation of the treaty between Ebla and Abarsal as being between Ebla and Aššur, thus locating Ḥassuwan, Kakmium, and Nīrar all to a region midway between the two cities (1986: 290). Astour argued for a more easterly location, following Fronzaroli in understanding two different toponyms to be indicated by the writing *ḥa-su/šu-wa-an*, one being a town within the borders of Ebla, the other being located between Ebla and Aššur. This opinion was informed by the

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<sup>305</sup> This nevertheless raises the question, then, of the name of ancient Tell Bazi/Tell Banat, presumably an important river crossing point. Although he does not address it directly, Archi seems to imply that this could be MaNE (2011: 6), though his evidence for this opinion is unclear.

possible confusion of Abarsal in the Abarsal Treaty with Aššur and the appearance of a similar toponym, <sup>uru</sup>*ḥa-šu-a-nu/ni*, in tablets from Tell Billa, near Mosul, northeast of the Tigris, dating to the Middle Assyrian period (1987: 11-12). In 1988, Astour again stressed his previous Anatolian connection with Ḥassuwan near to Ebla, stating that he had “reasons to identify [it] with Tilmen Hüyük, east of Islâhiye” (1988: 153). On the basis of reconstructed commercial itineraries, Davidovic has suggested a location north of Uršum, of which she followed Garelli (1963: 107) in placing west of the Euphrates, between Bireçik and Gaziantep (1989: 3-4). On the basis of onomastic similarities with Ebla, Bonechi and Catagnoti have ruled out a location in the Khabur and have argued that Ḥassuwan must be found nearer to Ebla, perhaps a bit north of Carchemish, and suggested that along with Kakmum and Nîrâr, it is to be found somewhere along the northern border of Ebla, west of Carchemish (1990: 23-24, cf. Bonechi 1991: 64). More recently, Archi has argued for a location of Uršum at Gaziantep and Ḥassuwan at Tilbeşar (2008).

Much has been said regarding the possible location of Ibal, not least because the locations of toponyms with which it seems to have been most closely associated are open to nearly as much speculation. Perhaps the most significant of these is Manuwat, the location of which would go far towards locating Ibal. It is here argued that Manuwat is most likely to be found opposite the Euphrates from Martu, in the region of Halabiya, whose name in the EBA seems to have been (Ḥ)umanu. Given the close relationship between the three toponyms Ibal, Manuwat, and Martu, this suggests the presence of the former somewhere in this region. Furthermore, if Astour’s association of Burman, Gasur, and Ibal proves valid, then it is perhaps relevant that Gasur is mentioned alongside Mt.

Dibar, likely the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz, in the lexical list *Harra=hubullu* (MSL 11, 1974: 23, lines 13-15) (Stol 1979: 25; see discussion in the previous chapter). Finally, Ibal’s connections with cities of the *badālum* area, and cities near that area, along with its relationship to Burman and Gasur, suggests a location north and west of Halabiya, perhaps stretching as far west as the Balikh.

The above geographic review demonstrates that those polities with which Ibal was most closely associated and interacted with most directly are located north and east Ebla, including especially the *badālum* region and places near to it. The toponyms mentioned above, at least those that can be localized, can nearly all be placed in an arc stretching from the Balikh, up the Euphrates, perhaps even into Turkey (though Carchemish is notably absent), then west along the Syro-Turkish border perhaps up to the Amanus Mountains. Thus, Archi’s very recent statement that “Ibal is undoubtedly to be located southeast of Salamiya and Homs” (Archi 2011: 6-7) must be rejected. There is no evidence to support the southern hypothesis. Instead, Ibal should be sought in northeastern Syria, east of the Euphrates, northwest of Halabiya, and south of Ḥarran, possibly bordering on the Balikh. This is an area which would accord well with the attestation of both oxen<sup>306</sup> and viticulture in Ibal, and, though not unique in this respect, could also be consistent with a division into areas qualified as ‘steppe’ and ‘canal’. This would seem to put Ibal in the vicinity of Martu, as well, which might be found on the right bank of the Euphrates, perhaps on the northern side of Jebel Bishri, more or less across from or upstream from Manuwat. It must be remembered, though, that any of these polities may be constituted by diffuse geographical borders and may not necessarily

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<sup>306</sup> Naram-Sin boasts of having slain a wild bull on Mt. Dibar. The possibility of equation of this toponym with the Jebel ‘Abd al-Aziz was discussed in the previous chapter.



correspond to an easily defined and delineated physical boundary. Furthermore, the territories of different polities might intermingle to a great degree in geographical terms.

In sum, the only evidence to suggest a possible ‘tribal’ character for the Ibalite polity is its seemingly extensive geographic character and its diffuse, apparently segmentary, political organization. This segmentation, though possibly the result of a mobile pastoral nature or pedigree, can also be explained by reference to the prevailing sociopolitical organization of Syria at this time, as evidenced by the Ebla texts.<sup>307</sup> No evidence exists to suggest a mobile character, though this has been commonly assumed. Ibal’s economic character, of which there is only paltry data, would not necessarily rule out a mobile pastoral, segmentary lineage character, but certainly does not suggest one, either. The current state of affairs regarding the Tribal Ibal Hypothesis is dubious and hardly justifies the following summary:

La confédération la plus importante était celle d’Ibal, qui se trouvait peut-être au sud-est d’Ébla, dans la région entre Qatna et le Moyen-Euphrate. Ibal semble avoir eu plusieurs villes capitales, parmi lesquelles la ville nommée “Ibal de la Steppe”. Les archives connaissent plus de dix établissements rattachés au royaume d’Ibal. Chacun de ces établissements est guidé par un personnage ayant le titre de en, roi ou ugula, titre qui convient bien à un chef de tribu, un scheich. Ibal fut complètement soumise à Ébla.

Biga 2008: 321

Ibal is not southeast of Ebla between Qatna and Al-Rawda (contra Biga 2014a: 205). It did likely contain numerous settlements, but there is no indication that the divisions identified in ARET I 5 and 10 should be understood as having a one-to-one correspondence with sedentary capitals. Furthermore, Ibal of the steppe was certainly not a settlement, but rather a geographic division of the polity which included two of its political segments. The application of the terms ‘chef’ and ‘scheich’ in the above

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<sup>307</sup> See also the comments in the excursus following this chapter.

passage serve not to reflect a clear image of the relevant data, but rather bear witness to both a widespread bias in favor of identifying mobile pastoral elements in the Ebla texts and an impressionistic understanding of the character and significance of that type of society.

*Other ‘Tribal’ polities in the royal archives of Ebla*

Besides Martu and Ibal, other polities in the Ebla archives have also been cited as having a ‘tribal’ character. These are Armi(um) and Manuwat—both discussed extensively above—as well as Azu, Dugurasu, DADAnu, and DU. Tribal characters have been inferred for these toponyms for one of three different reasons. Either, like Ibal, they are attested as having more than a single en at a time, as Archi (1987: 42) has noted for Armi<sup>308</sup>, Azu<sup>309</sup>, Dugurasu<sup>310</sup>, and Manuwat<sup>311</sup>, or, also like Ibal, they are interpreted as being a territorially expansive polity with dispersed political authority, as Fronzaroli has argued for DU (2003: 152), or finally, like Martu, they can be associated with toponyms in texts from later time periods that have been interpreted as having a ‘tribal’ character on the basis their association with an Amorite ethnic horizon. This latter reason is the case for DADAnu, barely attested at Ebla, which has been equated with Tidnum from Ur III texts (Pettinato 1995: 243; Marchesi 2006: 14; and see discussion in the following chapter). Upon applying the model of segmentary lineage systems developed

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<sup>308</sup> TM.75.G.411 (ARET IX 19) and TM.75.G.10188.

<sup>309</sup> TM.75.G.10182, and see also TM.75.G.10140 as noted by Bonechi 1993: 66.

<sup>310</sup> TM.75.G.10188.

<sup>311</sup> TM.75.G.1336 (MEE II 25), TM.75.G.1358 (MEE II 37 and ARET XV 10), TM.75.G.1796, TM.75.G.3223 (ARET III 192), and TM.75.G.3313 (ARET III 271).

in this dissertation, an indication of such societies is far from clear, and especially dubious in the case of Armi, Azu, Dugurasu<sup>312</sup>, and Manuwat.

Regarding Archi's statement that "Pour certaines villas sont attestés plusieurs ens régnant tous en même temps," leading him to hypothesize that "Cette pluralité de chefs peut s'expliquer par un situation d'urbanisation partiellement achevée..." (Archi 1987: 42), the evidence that he cited is simply inadequate. Only in the case of Ibal can it be maintained that multiple individuals may contemporaneously hold the title of en. The four other toponyms can be divided into two groups on the basis of the number of ens that Archi implicitly attributes to them. In the case of Azu and Manuwat, two regents are attested, while for Armi and Dugurasu, the evidence Archi cites simply indicates a plurality. In two of the texts cited by Archi to support the hypothesis of multiple kingship at Manuwat, the wider context of the passages in which the lines he cites appear actually suggest a situation of co-regency or, possibly, royal succession. Thus, in TM.75.G.1358 rev. II 11-III 2 (MEE 2 37):

2 <i>gu-zi</i> -TÚG 2 aktum-TÚG 2 íb-III-sa <sub>6</sub> - gùn	2, 2, 2 textiles
2 íb-lá GÁxLÁ 1 ma-na kù-gi	2 belts of 1 mina gold
2 en	(for) the two kings
<i>Ma-nu-wa-ad</i> <sup>ki</sup>	(of) Manuwat
En-na-Be	Enna-Be,
pa <sub>4</sub> -šeš <i>Ré-ti</i>	the pa <sub>4</sub> -šeš-official of Reti
šu mu-tag <sub>4</sub>	delivered.

And in TM.75.G.1336, v. VII 8-VIII 6 (MEE 2 25):

2 <i>é-da-um</i> -TÚG-2 2 aktum-TÚG 2 íb- túg-sa <sub>6</sub> -dar	2, 2, 2 textiles
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<sup>312</sup> Biga has recently made a compelling argument that Dugurasu might be an Egyptian toponym, owing to the rich nature of trade between Ebla and Dugurasu, the only destination for lapis lazuli sent from Ebla that is attested in the archives (2014b: 97-99).

2 íb-lá-x	2 belts
ku <sub>s</sub> kù-gi	30 shekels of gold
ì-giš-sag	(for) the anointing
2 en	(of) the 2 kings
<i>Ma-nu-wa-ad</i> <sup>ki</sup>	(of) Manuwat
<i>pá-qá-ma</i>	Paqama
šu mu-dúb	delivered.

Archi has demonstrated that the office of *pa<sub>4</sub>-šeš* is to be understood as *pāšiš*, and translated as “he who anoints” (1996: 70). It is certainly to be associated with the act of *ì-giš-sag*, or ‘anointing’. Pettinato had originally assumed that this term was associated with the coronation of a new king (1977), but in 1993 Archi (1993b: 17-18) demonstrated conclusively that this activity is associated with the relatives and closely associated individuals of a deceased person, as part of a funerary ceremony. A possible situation of succession cannot be ruled out in the above instance, however, as the death of a sitting king would necessitate the coronation of a new king, even if the act of ‘anointing’ is not to be directly related. Why would two kings receive goods upon a succession? It is possible that the predecessor is deceased, in which case the offering might be meant for that individuals funerary rites or tomb, a practice which is well-attested in Syria in the Ebla archives (cf. Biga 2007-2008, especially 266-267), though the sign É×PAP would be expected. Perhaps a more likely interpretation is of a condition of co-regency.

Unfortunately, tablets TM.75.G.3223 (ARET III 192) and TM.75.G.3313 (ARET III 271) are broken, and thus lacking in any other contextual information. Also, TM.75.G.1796 is, as yet, unpublished. Regarding Azu, there were likely two different toponyms with the same name or at least with very similar spellings in the Ebla texts, one located near Ebla and the other on the Euphrates, at Tell Hadidi on the right bank of the Euphrates about 30 km upstream from Emar (Archi et al. 1993: 116-117; Bonechi 1993: 66). Archi cited

only TM.75.G.10182, an as yet unpublished text, but Bonechi added also TM.75.G.10140, similarly unpublished, and suggested the possibility that the two kings referred to in that tablet are actually both deceased kings of Ebla, the Azu being referred to in that passage relating to the one within the realm of Ebla (Bonechi 1993: 66). This does not seem a possible explanation for TM.75.G.10182, however, where two kings of Azu are noted as being together in another place, RI-*ha-ti*<sup>ki</sup> (Archi 1987: 42), although admittedly the first part of the passage is missing. It is likely, though, that both of these texts refer to Azu on the Euphrates.

In contrast to the clear duality of kings attested in the above texts at Azu and Manuwat, though probably only a temporary state of affairs, and without implication of political divisions within those polities, are the ambiguous attributions of a plurality of kings attested for Armi and Dugurasu. The text TM.75.G.10188 is unpublished, yet from the passage cited by Archi: “(objets) *nig-ba en en D.*” (Archi 1987: 42)<sup>313</sup>, it seems possible also to translate: ‘objects given (by/to) the king (of Ebla) (by/to) the king (of) Dugurasu’. This construction can be compared to TM.75.G.2375 r. X 18-XI 2, cited by Archi (1993b: 18): “(vêtements) *ì-giš-sag en en Ì-mar*<sup>ki</sup> *ì-na-sum,*” I.e., ‘(clothes) (for) the anointing of the en (of Ebla), the en (of) Imar has given’. Alternately, Bonechi has similarly suggested that the above passage of TM.75.G.10188 could indicate a gift made by Dugurasu to the en-en, which is to say the cult of the deceased kings, of Ebla (1993: 66). This interpretation, though, seems less likely in light of the passage in TM.75.G.2375, cited above.<sup>314</sup> Nevertheless, a connection between these passages and a

<sup>313</sup> A clear example of the reduplication of the en sign without the meaning of plurality is TM.75.G.2375, obv. X 18-XI 2, cited in Archi 1993b: 18.

<sup>314</sup> M. G. Biga has kindly pointed out to me that the two signs ‘en’ actually appear in two different cases in the passage in question, ruling out a plural interpretation (personal communication).

mortuary context is a distinct possibility. Previous kings of Ebla are referred to frequently in the texts of ARET IX, where they are attested to receive food rations. In fact, one of the two texts Archi cited in relation to Armi(um) is in the same volume, where it appears as text no. 19 (TM.75.G.411). There the phrase en-en appears three times. Twice it can be interpreted as a reference to the deceased kings of Ebla. Once they are directly attested as receiving bread, presumably for their cult or some cultic or funerary rite. The second time the sons of the deceased kings receive a bread ration, which is perhaps another way of saying other royal family members, either deceased or living. The third time the phrase appears in relation to Armi, where ten loaves are dispersed to the KU.LI en-en *ar-mi*<sup>ki</sup>. The term KU.LI is glossed in the lexical lists of Ebla with the Semitic phrase *la-ù-um*, which is usually interpreted to be /ra'um/, literally 'friend' (Krebernik 1983: 38). In the administrative texts, however, it is understood to indicate some sort of dependent or servant (Milano 1990: 393-94; Catagnoti and Fronzaroli 2010: 17). In light of the two previous uses of en-en in this text, it is tempting to hypothesize here a connection to a cult of deceased kings in Armi. In any event, depending on the exact meaning of the phrase KU.LI in this instance, the author of the text need not imply the existence of multiple simultaneous kings of Armi, which are otherwise only possibly attested in TM.75.G.10188. In that unpublished text, the same in which Dugurasu makes its single appearance, Archi transcribed obv. VII 9-13 thus: "1 dib (1+1+1 vêtements) níg-ba en en A. níg-gú-du" (1987: 42). As in the case of the passage concerning Dugurasu, discussed above, another translation than the one implied is possible: '1 plate, (1+1+1 textiles) (as) gift (for) the king (of Ebla), the king (of) Armi has given'. It might also be possible to interpret this passage, as Bonechi does, above, as

being a gift for the deceased kings of Ebla from Armi. However one is to interpret these last cases, the evidence cited by Archi to support the claim that some Syrian polities in the Ebla texts possess multiple kings, as result of political decentralization and a possible ‘tribal’ character following from an association with mobile pastoralism, must be rejected. In the case of Manuwat, a duality of kings is possibly indicated in only two texts and is likely to be attributed to a co-regency, and possibly also for Azu as well. In any event, the texts do not demonstrate a case of political decentralization, nor give the impression that such a plurality is at all common. The texts cited to support a multiplicity of kings for Dugurasu and Manuwat do not even demonstrate the presence of two kings, let alone a larger plurality, in either of these polities. Ibal, then, stands alone in its unique character of having as many as four different contemporaneously attested ens, though with four different cities. The Ebla texts do not support the hypothesis of a similar nature for Azu, Dugurasu, Manuwat, or Armi, at least not as regards a phenomenon of multiple kingships.

The possibility of a segmentary character for the toponym written DU is more ambiguous. In 2003, Fronzaroli described this toponym as “indicava probabilmente una region di village caratterizzati da un’autorità diffusa” (2003: 152). A review of the twenty-two appearances of DU in the published corpus seems to corroborate this characterization. None of these texts witness an en, lu gal, u gu la, or even a ma š ki m of DU, or pertaining to any individual thereof. In one text, however, a *ku-tu* of DU is recorded. Milano demonstrated that this term is probably meant to indicate some class of merchant, deriving from the Akkadian word *katā’um*, “to take as pledge,” to mean something like “guarantor” (2003: 421-22). Thus, it does not imply any particular

sociopolitical structure for DU. Despite a seeming lack of political authority, however, the toponym DU can be shown to encapsulate three other toponyms in TM.75.G.1362, rev. III 12-V 4 (MEE 2 40): DUBan, Ibarium, and Baziru, otherwise unattested. The same text records the journey of ten people to Ebla for the purpose of swearing fealty in the temple of Kura. Catagnoti implied that this might indicate a ‘tribal’ character, comparing the situation of these multiple oath-takers from DU with similar situations for Ibal, Manuwat, and Martu (1997: 125). This fact does indeed imply for these three polities of DU some degree of political independence from one another. The fact that seven individuals from DUBan alone come to swear, and two from Ibarium, might further suggest that these polities themselves are characterized by some degree of heterarchy or internal political autonomy. In this way, although the evidence is sparse, it is possible to interpret DU simply as a geographic term, without connotation of a specific political structure or polity. Other texts in the corpus, however, seem to suggest that DU was treated as a unified whole. In four texts DU is blandly the recipient of goods from the administration of Ebla<sup>315</sup> while in TM.75.G.2452, rev. VIII 3-5 (ARET VII 11), it is the origin for a measure of raw wool sent to Ebla. This could, though, suggest that DU is, in fact, a single political entity, albeit one that is characterized by a high degree of heterarchy, or segmentarity. It is also possible, however, that it is a region of weakly or uniquely integrated communities. These facts need not imply that the political character of DU follows from a mobile pastoral subsistence strategy. TM.75.G.1562, rev. VI 11-VII 8 (ARET II 28), somewhat enigmatic in its structure, seems to imply that along with 𐎧𐎲𐎠𐎵, DU is a part of ‘Adaratum, two toponyms that Bonechi placed in the realm of

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<sup>315</sup> TM.75.G.3267, rev. III 4’ (ARET III 213), TM.75.G.1502, obv. I 16-II 1 (ARET IV 16), TM.75.G.1418, obv. IV 10-12 (ARET XV 19), and TM.75.G.1878, obv. VIII 12-13 (ARET XV 40, MEE 10, 24).



Ebla (1993: 20, 180). It is possible, however, that this text records an individual from DU together with others in a third location. The possible location of DU, in an area with a steppe environment, is compatible with a mobile pastoral subsistence strategy. Archi suggested that DU appears in the same region as Tuttul, the location of which is known to be at modern Tell Bi'a, at the confluence of the Balikh and Euphrates Rivers at modern Raqqa (1990c: 202). Ample evidence can be cited to support an eastern location somewhere near Tuttul. In TM.76.G.530, obv. X 6-12 (ARET I 5; MEE 5 10), DU is mentioned alongside four other toponyms, including Ašu, possibly Azu, modern Tell Hadidi, some 30 km north of Emar on the Euphrates, as well as Tuttul. In TM.75.G.1753, rev. III 11-IV 16 (ARET II 29; ARET XVI 22; MEE 7 42; Milano 2003), it is mentioned alongside Ḫalsum, a toponym which is attested to have both an *en* and a *badālum* and which is therefore likely to lay somewhere to the east of the Euphrates (Archi et al. 1993: 269; Bonechi 1993: 200-201). Further evidence to support an eastern location for DU can be found in a chancellery text, the so-called “Tavoletta dell istruzioni di DU,” TM.75.G.4679+, edited by Fronzaroli (2003), where it appears as ARET XIII 14. It is known from a large and fragmentary tablet, reconstructed in large part from twenty-two fragments. Unfortunately, large lacunae still obscure a full understanding of many parts of the text. Nevertheless, the beginning of the tablet seems to reference the funeral of an individual named *a-sum*, which Fronzaroli interprets as Ay-šum, and who, as he points out, may be the same individual as a merchant from Burman, connected to officials dealing with equid teams, an individual whose funeral is recorded in two other texts and who may have been “abbastanza importante da richiedere le cerimonie funebri descritte nel nostro testo” (for references see 2003: 154). Fronzaroli went further in locating DU

“nell’area step pica a sud dell’Eufrate” (2003: 152). Although he provided no specific justification for this opinion, it seems to be informed by his translation of *sa-gáz* in obv. XI as “seminomadi” and his interpretation of the connection between the lines of this column with the exchange between Durti of Imar and an *ugula* (apparently of Ebla) in obv. XII (2003: 158-59). As will be demonstrated below, Fronzaroli misinterpreted the significance of *sa-gáz*, which should be understood in this context to indicate not semi-nomadism, but rather robbery. DU then appears as a possible candidate for a segmentary lineage polity in the Ebla corpus, but without any compelling positive evidence.

The final toponym to be considered in this subsection is that of DADAnu. A search of edited texts and published excerpts has yielded only two attestations of this toponym<sup>316</sup>. DADAnu is attested in both of these texts to have an *en*, and in TM.76.G.531 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 11; Archi 1985a no. 29; Pettinato 1995 no. 3) the presence of two *ábba* is also indicated. Despite this meager pool of data, Pettinato has boldly claimed that in the case of TM.76.G.531,

E’ determinant poi per la definitiva identificazione di *mar-tu<sup>ki</sup>* con gli Amorrei die period posteriori la concomitanza hello stesso test di *mar-tu<sup>ki</sup>* con *da-da-nu<sup>ki</sup>*, il ben onto Tidnum die testi numerici, un’altra tribù amorfa imparentata app unto con i Martu.

Pettinato 1995: 243

Recently, Marchesi provided a succinct and comprehensive review of this toponym and apparent ethnonym (2006: 7-19). This place and group of people is attested primarily in Sumerian literary texts dating to latter part of the Ur III period and the beginning of the Old Babylonian period (for previous literature see Marchesi 2006: 9, fn. 21). A homophonous toponym that may or may not be related to this is recorded in West Semitic

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<sup>316</sup> TM.76.G.531, obv. VII 4-8 (ARET VIII 531; MEE 5 11; Archi 1985a no. 29; Pettinato 1995 no. 3), and TM.75.G.4251, obv. I’ 1’-3’ (ARET XII 119).

sources as *Ddn* or *Dtn* and is “generally identified with the Tideans of the Mesopotamian sources” (Marchesi 2006: 9). Pettinato’s enthusiasm in connecting the DADAnu and Martu of the Ebla texts likely stems from the fact that in Old Babylonian synonym lists, *Di-ta-nu* is glossed as *Su-tu-u* (see Draffkorn-Kilmer 1963: 428), “an Amorite tribe,” (Marchesi 2006: 9) while *Ti-id-nu* is glossed as *A-mur-r[u-u]* (Gurney and Hulin 1964: pl. 268, text 394 line 122). There is, thus, a connection between Tidnum and the Ur III ethnonym MAR.TU/*amurru*. The connection between Ur III MAR.TU/*amurru* and Martu of the Ebla texts will be examined thoroughly in the following chapter. Leaving that issue aside for the moment, it is worth pointing out that no solid evidence exists to suggest a connection between Ur III and Old Babylonian Ditanu/Tidnum and a West Semitic toponym *Ddn* or *Dtn*. In 2002, Astour placed them both in the Hamrin, following Michalowski (1976: 104-111, cf. 2011: 111-117) in pointing out that “Šu-Sin fought the Tidnum... in the Transtigris and that the principal and most endangered sector of Šu-Sin’s defensive wall, called *Muriq-Tidnim* ‘Fender of Tidnum’, ran from the middle Tigris to Zimudar on the Diyala” (2002: 116-117, cf. Civil 1967 and Wilcke 1990). Although Marchesi admitted that this passage suggests that the Tideans, at the time, must have inhabited the Hamrin region, he suggested, nonetheless, that a western presence is clear from an earlier period on the basis of the two instances of DADAnu and a passage in Gudea’s statue B, col. IV, lines 3-20 (cf. Edzard 1997: 34):

<p>ù-ma-núm / ħur-sağ me-nu-a-ta / ba<sub>11</sub>-  sal-la / ħur-sağ mar-tu-ta / NA<sub>4</sub>.na-gal /  im-ta-e<sub>11</sub> / na-rú-a-šè / mu-dím / kisal-é-</p>	<p>From Umanum, (in) the region<sup>317</sup> of  Menua<sup>318</sup> (and) Basalla, (in) the region of  MAR-TU, he brought down large stones.</p>
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<sup>317</sup> This translation is preferred in light of the earlier lines: “the city of Uršu, in the country of Ebla”. It would be an error to assume that Uršu was in the ‘mountain’ of Ebla, or probably even the territory of Ebla at this time.

<sup>318</sup> Possibly Manuwat, see above.

ninnu-ka / mu-na-ni-dù / ti-da-núm / hur-sağ mar-tu-ta / nu <sub>11</sub> -gal lagab-bi-a / mi-ni-túm	He fashioned them into steles. In the courtyard of the Eninnu he set them up. From Tidnum, (in) the region of MAR- TU, he brought an alabaster <sup>319</sup> block.
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Marchesi argued that this passage reflects the presence of Tidnum alongside the Martu of the Ebla corpus, by suggesting “it is quite possible that the Tidnean nomads moved in the course of time...” (2006: 16). It is more likely that the two toponyms Tid(a)num and DADAnu bear no relationship to one another, as the term MAR.TU came to acquire a sociological meaning in texts from southern Mesopotamia at this time, as will be discussed in the following chapter. There is, then, no compelling reason to assume to a mobile pastoral or segmentary lineage character for this Syrian polity during the period covered by the Ebla texts.

*‘Tribal’ polities in the royal archives of Ebla: Šuragarru and his brothers*

The final hypothesized candidate ‘tribal’ polity in the Ebla texts is the enigmatic case of an individual named Šuragarru (variously spelled *šu-ra-gàr-ru*<sub>12</sub> and *šu*<sup>IKU</sup>-*ra-gàr-ru*<sub>12</sub>). This individual appears in ARET I 1 and 3-8 amongst polities referred to only by toponyms and the titles of their rulers and officials. He always appears with his brothers, twice numbering four<sup>320</sup>, once seven<sup>321</sup>, but six times numbering six<sup>322</sup>. He also appears along with a single ábba in each instance, except in TM.75.G.1591, obv. V 13-

<sup>319</sup> Most likely calcite is meant here. Unfortunately, this description offers little help in locating Tidnum as it is a particularly common mineral (Moorey 1999: 21). Lönnqvist and Lönnqvist noted “large marble/gypsum exposures... at Alinbeh on the way from Deir ez-Zor just before Tibne at Jebel Bishri” which “could have served as a convenient site for transporting marble/gypsum = alabaster along the river to Lower Mesopotamia” (2011: 218-219).

<sup>320</sup> TM.75.G.1591, obv. V 13- VI 5, (ARET I 8) and TM.75.G.3072+3073, obv. IX 4’-5’ (ARET III 60).

<sup>321</sup> TM.75.G.10256, obv. VIII 13- IX 8 (ARET I 4).

<sup>322</sup> TM.75.G.2525, obv. VII 4-10 (ARET I 1), TM.75.G.1443, obv. VIII 5-12 (ARET I 3), TM.76.G.530, obv. VII 7- VIII 3 (ARET I 5), TM.75.G.2590, obv. X 7- XI 3 (ARET I 6), TM.75.G.1828, obv. VII 12- VIII 4 (ARET I 7), and also TM.76.G.531, obv. IV 13-20 (ARET VIII 531).

VI 5 (ARET I 8), where three are attested, interestingly along with two fewer brothers (this portion of TM.75.G.3072+, obv. IX 4'-5' is broken). Six times in ARET I he appears also with twenty *guruš*<sup>323</sup>, and also in TM.76.G.531, obv. IV 13-20 (ARET VIII 531), once with twenty *maškim*<sup>324</sup>, suggesting that *guruš* was the more appropriate term in that instance. He is the only individual to appear amongst the lists of toponyms in ARET I 1-9. His are not the only 'brothers' (*šeš*) attested in these texts, but they are the only ones amongst the list of toponyms and, together with Dulu and Tišum, the latter of which always immediately follows him in these lists, these three 'polities' (if we may refer to Šuragarra and his brothers in this way) account for the only mentions of *guruš* in these texts.<sup>325</sup> These enigmatic qualities led Archi to conclude that "Sembra evidente come questo personaggio sia il capo di un gruppo tribale" (1985b: 221; see also 1982: 208).

A search of the Ebla Digital Archive<sup>326</sup> demonstrates that the personal name Šuragarra appears nine other times as well<sup>327</sup>. His restoration in TM.75.G.315+316+317, rev. II' 5"-III' 7 (ARET III 100) also seems certain. Šuragarra has also been cited as appearing in the unedited text TM.75.G.10079 (Biga 2008: 320). Of these, in addition to the texts of ARET I, ten very likely refer to the same individual. They seem to follow the

<sup>323</sup> TM.75.G.2525, obv. VII 4-10 (ARET I 1), TM.75.G.1443, obv. VIII 5-12 (ARET I 3), TM.76.G.530, obv. VII 7- VIII 3 (ARET I 5), TM.75.G.2590, obv. X 7- XI 3 (ARET I 6), TM.75.G.1828, obv. VII 12- VIII 4 (ARET I 7), TM.75.G.1591, obv. V 13- VI 5 (ARET I 8).

<sup>324</sup> TM.75.G.10256, obv. VIII 13- IX 8 (ARET I 4).

<sup>325</sup> Except in the mention of Šuragarra in TM.75.G.1591, obv. V 13- VI 5 (ARET I 8), all mentions of *guruš* come in a group of twenty.

<sup>326</sup> <http://virgo.unive.it/ebonline/>

<sup>327</sup> TM.75.G.2525, obv. VII 4-10 (ARET I 1), TM.75.G.1443, obv. VIII 5-12 (ARET I 3), TM.75.G.10256, obv. VIII 13- IX 8 (ARET I 4), TM.76.G.530, obv. VII 7- VIII 3 (ARET I 5), TM.75.G.2590, obv. X 7- XI 3 (ARET I 6), TM.75.G.1828, obv. VII 12- VIII 4 (ARET I 7), TM.75.G.1591, obv. V 13- VI 5 (ARET I 8), TM.75.G.3072+, obv. IX 4'-5' (ARET III 60), TM.75.G.3114, II 1'-3' (ARET III 99), TM.75.G.3657, obv. III 13-IV 6 (ARET III 588), TM.75.G.3966, obv. III 13 – IV 6 (ARET III 862), TM.75.G.3985, rec. II 3'-5' (ARET III 877), TM.76.G.524, obv. XI 37-XII 7, rec. I 18-22 (ARET VIII 524), TM.76.G.531, obv. IV 13-20 (ARET VIII 531), TM.75.G.4395, III' 1'-4' (ARET XII 236), and TM.75.G.4882, I' 1' (ARET XII 539).

same format as the corresponding entries in the ARET I texts. The remaining texts are more enigmatic. They probably do not all refer to this individual. TM.75.G.3966, obv. III 13 – IV 6 (ARET III 862) mentions a Šuragarru, son of Imud-damu of Kakmium, while TM.76.G.524, obv. XI 37-XII 7 (ARET VIII 524) records a Šuragarru of Sidamu, receiving goods in Aḥadamu, implying that these are different individuals than the one that appears in those instances cited above. These texts offer precious little information speaking to a possible segmentary lineage nature to Šuragarru and his brothers, beyond their enigmatic appearance. Astour cited TM.75.G.524, rev. I 18-22 (ARET VIII 524) as evidence that a ‘tribal’ interpretation of Šuragarru and his associates was impossible, as he is linked with the city of Sidamu (1992: 56), but, of course, it is not clear that the same individual is meant, and even if he is this would not necessarily rule out a mobile pastoral or segmentary lineage interpretation<sup>328</sup>. In fact, the Šuragarru of ARET I does seem to have a toponymic connection after all. In TM.75.G.3114, II 1’-3’ (ARET III 99) and TM.75.G.3657, obv. III 13 – IV 6 (ARET III 588) an individual of the same name is connected with *a-bu<sub>x</sub>-da-nu* and *a-bu<sub>x</sub>-da-an*, respectively, and in TM.75.G.315+, rev. II’ 5”-III’ 7 (ARET III 100), which all but proves the connection, where his name would appear in a lacuna, there are preserved 5 PNs, and the phrase “his brothers of *a-bu<sub>x</sub>-da-nu*”. These must be the five brothers of the Šuragarru of ARET I. In 2008 Biga also cited the unpublished text, TM.75.G.10079, where an individual with the same name is qualified as *u g u l a* of Abadanu (2008: 320). Biga ostensibly had no trouble rectifying a connection between Šuragarru and a toponym with an assumed ‘tribal’ connection, as she advocates that the term *u g u l a* in that text “peut bien être trait par scheich” (2008: 320).

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<sup>328</sup> In fact, it is possible that, even with the place determinative, some terms usually understood as GNs might, could, in fact, have more reality as political than geographical constructions. In that capacity, they might well indicate tribal polities or segments thereof.

In 2011, summarizing his understanding of the geographical distribution of the polities of ARET I 1-9, Archi wrote “The list then mentions a sheikh (Šura-garru) and the chiefs of his tribe (20 guruš): their habitat must have been to the east (near lake Jabboul), southeast of Ebla. Tišum must also have been found in the same area (*ARES* II: 451)” (Archi 2011b: 6). Although he gives no explicit reason for this location, it implicitly has to do with the fact that after Tišum and Kablul in the ARET I 1-9 list of toponyms is Ibal, which Archi insists is to be found in the steppe east of Qatna (1985b: 221; 2011b: 7). As discussed above, such an attribution is highly suspect. Ibal is more likely to be found near the Euphrates in the area of Halabiya, perhaps northwest of that, along or east of the Balikh. Also as discussed above, Arḥadu and Ḫutimu, which appear immediately before Šuragarru in the ARET I 1-9 lists, should be found near Ḫarran, east of the Euphrates, while Kablul is associated with Dulu, likely also on the edge of the *badālum* region. This implies that Šuragarru and the associated toponym Abudan(u)<sup>329</sup> must be found in this general area as well.

There is no good evidence by which to judge a segmentary lineage nature for Šuragarru, his brothers, his elder(s), and his guruš. He does appear enigmatically in the texts of ARET I 1-9, and while this suggests a unique sociopolitical nature relative to Ebla, it offers no evidence of any specific characteristics beyond, seemingly, a kinship character. He is apparently associated with a toponym, but this is not enough to rule out a mobile pastoral character. The argument that Šuragarru is a ‘sheikh’ has been inspired primarily by the assumption that such groups must exist in the Ebla texts. This assumption seems to have done more to influence Archi’s location of both Šuragarru and

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<sup>329</sup> A search of the online Ebla electronic corpus demonstrates that Abudan(u) is only attested a single time without Šuragarru, in TM.76.G.540 rev. I 5-6 (ARET VIII 540).

Ibal than vice versa. The assumption that his association with a polity rules out this possibility, whether that polity is Sidamu, Abudan(u), or any other, is indefensible as well, for various reasons. We cannot presume the relationship Šuragarru had with this polity, nor exactly what the scribes intended to communicate with that toponym, and, as Chapter 3 has demonstrated, even if he can be understood to be the ruler of that place, it does not rule out a segmentary lineage character all the same, though it might imply that this relationship was undergoing a process of transformation. The possibility of a segmentary lineage character for Šuragarru is enticing, and though speculative, he is perhaps the best case for it that can be made in the Ebla texts. His enigmatic appearance in the lists of ARET I 1-9 would seem to be consistent with a segmentary lineage character, though far from specific to it.

*‘Tribal’ groups and onomastics in the royal archives of Ebla: KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, da-mu, and li-im*

The disparate phenomena that have been cited as having some connection to ‘tribalism’ and/or mobile pastoralism in the Ebla corpus extends, also, to three different organizations of people: the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, the *damu*, and the *līm*. Of these three, the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU are the best attested, appearing in nineteen texts published in whole or in part<sup>330</sup>. The *damu* appear in four texts<sup>331</sup>, while the *līm* appear just once<sup>332</sup>. It has been

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<sup>330</sup> TM.75.G.1583 (ARET XVI 3, Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 1 and 2), TM.75.G.2175 (ARET XVI 10, Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 3-7), TM.75.G.2366 (ARET XVI 4, Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 8 and 9), TM.76.G.153+, obv. VI 1'-rev. I 3 (Pettinato 1998, no. 10), TM.76.G.169+ obv. II 1-9 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 11), TM.76.G.169+ obv. IV 7-VI 6 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 12 and 13), TM.76.G.169+ rev. I 9-II 10 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 14, Catagnoli 2012: 89), TM.76.G.181+ obv. II 3-6 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 15), TM.76.G.196, obv. III 1-7 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 16. Fronzaroli 1999 no. 1), TM.76.G.204, obv. II 4-9 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 17), TM.76.G.233, obv. I 1-4, r. III 2-V 2 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 18-20, 31), TM.76.G.235 obv. III 4-v. III 1 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 21-23), TM.76.G.270, obv. V 2'-8' and rev. I 1-5 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 24, 32), TM.76.G.270+, rev. II 1-8 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 25. Fronzaroli 1999b no. 2), TM.76.G.413, obv. II 3'-6'



argued, however, that the relative significance of all of these groups is under-represented in the Ebla corpus relative to their sociopolitical significance, as attested by their common appearance in the onomasticon of that corpus (Bonechi 1997b: 481).

Application of the model of segmentary lineage systems developed here to the relevant data, though, demonstrates that the evidence is ambiguous as to such an association.

Hypotheses for ‘tribal’ connections for these terms are primarily founded only on tentative etymological bases, informed by an assumption that mobile pastoral communities must be represented in the Ebla corpus.

In 1998, Fronzaroli undertook a review of thirty different passages containing the sign combination KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU from fourteen different texts of the Ebla corpus (see citations above). He summarized his findings thus:

The logogram certainly refers to people, who may reside..., leave..., begin a journey..., travel..., be on a journey..., go down..., return.

Such personnel receive dispositions..., which they must listen to... Take delivery of... or receive goods...; deliver them... after having transported them. Participate in journeys... and equip caravans... Furthermore, they are employed when they are to inspect..., open... and embank or dam... the waters.

The administration, which sometimes cites them together with the *zà-ús*, see [sic] to their rations..., at least when they are in the cities and the surrounding villages...

Fronzaroli 1998: 111

Fronzaroli’s translation of KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU as ‘family’, */kam-mu/* (1998: 112) was inspired at least in part by the co-occurrence of the group called the *damu* in TM.76.G.233, obv. I 1-4, obv. III 2-V 2 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 18-20, 31) and TM.76.G.270, obv. V 2’-8’, rev. I 1-5 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 24, 32), to which he implies a certain degree of equivalency:

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(Fronzaroli 1998 no. 26), TM.76.G.669 (ARET XVI 19, Fronzaroli 1998 no. 27-29), TM.76.G.704 (ARET XVI 15, Fronzaroli 1998 no. 30), TM.75.G.10117 (ARET XVI 7), and TM.76.G.344, obv. II 2-III 4 (Pettinato 1981 no. 7. Bonechi 1997b: 479).

<sup>331</sup> TM.76.G.233, obv. I 1-4, obv. III 2-V 2 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 18-20, 31), TM.76.G.270, obv. V 2’-8’ and rev. I 1-5 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 24, 32), TM.75.G.3524 (ARET III 460+), and TM.76.G.344, obv. II 2-III 4 (Pettinato 1981 no. 7. Bonechi 1997b: 479).

<sup>332</sup> TM.75.G.1913+ (ARET XIII 1).

In these two attestations... *da-mu* cannot simply indicate ‘blood’, as in the gloss of the bilingual lexical list... In later Assyrian and Babylonian texts *šīru* ‘flesh’ and *damu* ‘blood’ may indicate ‘kin, one’s own flesh and blood’ (*CAD*, D, 79, 3; Š, III, 118, 2) but here the context requires *da-mu da-mu* to indicate a social organisation which can detach its personnel at the request of the Eblaic administration. It must therefore be concluded that the *da-mu da-mu* in these contexts should indicate the kinsmen, belonging to well-defined family groups, perhaps semi-nomads, who maintain preferential relations with the royal family.

Fronzaroli 1998: 111

KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU then, he speculates, could be a synonym for *da-mu*, or the later associated term *li-mu*, or it might pertain to “a structure of a higher level”, with the literal meaning of ‘family’ (1998: 112-113).

A review of the relevant texts, including two more than appear in Fronzaroli’s 1998 study, and a clearer understanding of some of the passages made possible in the last sixteen years, does not appreciably change Fronzaroli’s summary of the data. It does, however, suggest a misplaced emphasis. Of the nineteen KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU texts, five concern water works.<sup>333</sup> Six texts concern military activities.<sup>334</sup> Two integrate both concerns.<sup>335</sup> Seven texts concern transportation, most often of flour or grain products.<sup>336</sup> From the basis of these observations alone, it is not possible to speculate on the qualities or behavior of the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU other than to say that they are associated with irrigation and transportation activities, especially of grain and grain products. They are also associated

<sup>333</sup> TM.76.G.196, obv. III 1-7 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 16; Fronzaroli 1999 no. 1), TM.76.G.233, obv. I 1-4 and obv. III 2-V 2 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 18-20, 31), TM.76.G.235 obv. III 4-rev. III 1 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 21-23), TM.76.G.270, obv. V 2’-8’ and rev. I 1-5 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 24, 32), TM.76.G.270+, rev. II 1-8 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 25; Fronzaroli 1999b no. 2).

<sup>334</sup> TM.75.G.1583 (ARET XVI 3, Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 1 and 2), TM.76.G.169+ obv. II 1-9 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 11), TM.76.G.270+, rev. II 1-8 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 25; Fronzaroli 1999b no. 2), TM.76.G.669 (ARET XVI 19; Fronzaroli 1998 no. 27-29), TM.76.G.704 (ARET XVI 15; Fronzaroli 1998 no. 30), TM.75.G.10117 (ARET XVI 7).

<sup>335</sup> TM.76.G.270+, v. II 1-8 and TM.75.G.10117.

<sup>336</sup> TM.75.G.2175 (ARET XVI 10; Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 3-7), TM.76.G.153+, obv. VI 1’-rev. I 3 (Pettinato 1998, no. 10), TM.76.G.169+ obv. IV 7-VI 6 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 12 and 13), TM.76.G.169+ rev. I 9-II 10 (Fronzaroli 1998 no. 14; Catagnoti 2012: 89), TM.76.G.233, obv. I 1-4, obv. III 2-V 2 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 18-20, 31), TM.76.G.235 obv. III 4-rev. III 1 (Fronzaroli 1998 nos. 21-23), and TM.76.G.669 (ARET XVI 19; Fronzaroli 1998 no. 27-29).

sometimes with military troops and themselves seem to play a role in warfare. When tested against the model of segmentary lineage systems developed in this chapter the results are ambiguous. In TM.75.G.10117, the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU seem to be associated with pastoral products, though this association is unclear. The mobility of the group is clearly expressed throughout the relevant corpus. Transportation of goods, along with seasonal agricultural or hydrological work might well accord with a mobile subsistence strategy, but does not necessarily imply such a connection. Unfortunately, no information speaks to the internal sociopolitical structure of the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU. The possibility that the relationship between the administration and the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU was not simply one of orders given and obeyed is indicated by the curious text TM.75.G.10117. There, the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, seemingly charged with procuring grain for the administration, presumably by trade, seem to have resorted to aggressive means of procurement. These military sorties, which seem to have occurred despite the express wishes of the king of Ebla, could indicate that the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU had their own independent interests in mind and were capable of acting independent of his wishes and commands. The phenomenon of a mobile pastoral group raiding sedentary centers for agricultural products is a common phenomenon in ethnographic literature.<sup>337</sup> These results suggest that a mobile pastoral and, thus, a segmentary lineage system is possible for the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, but fail to provide any compelling positive evidence for this interpretation. Further contextual information and more texts in the future could change this state of affairs.

Since the time of his study in 1998, Fronzaroli's position on the semi-nomadic association of the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU only seems to have strengthened, as is demonstrated by the translation of the term by Catagnoti and Fronzaroli to mean "Seminomadi che

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<sup>337</sup> Even in second millennium texts from Southern Mesopotamia, as discussed in the following chapter.

mantengono relazioni preferenziali con la famiglia reale” (2010: 64). This interpretation rests largely on the association of the term with *damu* and an etymological argument inspired by that association—that KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, to be read *kam-mu* derives from *kīmu*, ‘family’. Fronzaroli called it “a Semitic logogram; the syllabogram *-mu* states the value of KAM<sub>4</sub> and connotes it as a nominal form” (1998: 103). The nature of the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU does not seem to exclude this possibility, but this etymological connection alone is not enough to discriminate as clearly as Catagnoli and Fronzaroli would imply by their rather specific interpretation of the term. Another possible interpretation is that it is a frozen Semitic nominal form of *kamû*, B ‘captured, captive’ (CAD K, 127). Following this interpretation, the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU might consist of individuals that have been pressed into the service of the Eblaite administration. This situation might explain the labor this group was involved in, as well as their seeming revolt in TM.75.G.10117. It is also possible that the sign combination at Ebla, like others, is simply unrelated to any known Semitic roots.

The connection Fronzaroli assumed between KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU and *da-mu* is ambiguous in the Ebla corpus. The two terms seem to appear together in the same passages in TM.76.G.270 and TM.76.G.344. Bonechi has suggested a possible interpretation of the term *da-mu* on the basis of an interpretation of the meaning of an identical term in the Mari texts of the second millennium where, meaning literally ‘blood,’ the word stood as a metonymic for a contract between two parties that had no sanguineous relationship (1997: 480). At Ebla, the term appears in bilingual lexical lists (VE 970, sources A and B), where it is glossed by the sign UŠ<sub>x</sub> (LAK-672), which, he maintains, is a variant of úš, ‘blood’. For further support, Bonechi cited another text from Ebla, TM.75.G.2300,

where this sign is glossed with *sa-ri-a-du*, which derives from the root for ‘hair,’ adapted as a metaphor for networks of blood vessels (Bonechi 1997: 478, citing Fronzaroli 1997: 58). Bonechi goes on to argue that the frequency of the terms *da-mu* and *li-mu* in the onomasticon of Ebla, which are not theophoric elements, but often take the place of such elements, along with the relative absence of these organizations in documents of palatial origin, must indicate that these groups had “leur enracinement dans les campagnes agricoles et pastorales (déjà dimorphiques)” (1997: 480-81). The existence of the term KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, if indeed it is related to ‘family’, *da-mu*, if indeed it relates to sanguinity, and *limu*, attested only once at Ebla outside of the onomasticon, and associated with some sort of extended family segment later at Mari, may indeed suggest that kin groups and kin relationships bear sociopolitical and ideological significance at Ebla. It must, however, be pointed out that this fact in itself is hardly evidence to prove the existence of mobile pastoralists or segmentary lineage systems in EBA Syrian society. Even if these terms are associated with those characteristics at Mari, kinship terminology, like kinship relations, are not exclusive to such societies.

*‘Tribal’ groups in the royal archives of Ebla: sa-gáz*

Fronzaroli (2003) and Catagnoli and Fronzaroli (2010: 194) also translate the sumerogram *sa-gáz* as “nomadizzavano” (2003: 147), “seminomadi”, and “pastori seminomadi” (2003: 158). They derived this translation from Conti’s understanding of the term, based on his analysis of its appearance in an Eblaite bilingual lexical list, as “‘bandito’ (akk. *ḥabbātu*), nel significato ‘vagabondo’, ‘lavoratore emigrante’” (1990: 116-17). On its face, this analysis seems bizarre. Neither ‘bandit’ in English nor

‘bandito’ in Italian have a connotation of migrant labor. Conti’s understanding actually draws on a long history of confusion connected with the Akkadian word *ḫabātu*, this despite the fact that the gloss offered for the term in the lexical list is actually *na-ti-tum* (1990: 116). It would be enough here to discount this translation simply through an analysis of its poor fit in the contexts in which it appears in the Ebla texts. A review of the difficulty surrounding the Akkadian term *ḫabātu*, though, and its relationship with the Semitic root *nd(d)*, demonstrates that the correct translation in these contexts is clearly ‘to rob,’ with a connotation of a raid, or *razzia*.

Conti identified the *na-ti-tum* gloss of *sa-gáz* at Ebla, with a root *ndd* (1990: 116). Citing Koehler et al. (1983: 635), he attributed to that Semitic root the meanings “‘fuggire, muoversi, vagare,’” (1990: 116).<sup>338</sup> Nevertheless, Conti did not simply translate the term as Koehler et al. His translation is also informed and complicated by the wider appearance of *sa-gáz* in Sumerian and Akkadian writing. On that topic he cited only Salonen (1968: 341) and Westenholz (1975a: 16). In fact, these citations are only the tip of a much deeper iceberg. Salonen’s translation, “‘Vagabund’, ‘Wanderarbeiter’” (1968: 341), was informed by Von Soden’s speculation that the appearance of *sa-gáz*, glossed as *ḫabātu* in lists of agricultural workers in bilingual Sumerian and Akkadian lexical lists, most notably the series *UR<sub>5</sub>-ra=ḫubullu*, must derive from a meaning “to go”, attested to belong to that Akkadian word, and thus, be translated as ‘migrant laborer’ (*apud* Bottéro 1954: 142-43, esp. 143 n1). Westenholz cited Salonen’s translation of *sa-gáz* for Pre-Sargonic and Sargonic Sumerian texts at Nippur because “it fits far better... than the translation as ‘robber’” (1975a: 16).

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<sup>338</sup> In fact, this root has been the subject of much discussion since Conti’s writing, and Greenberg has argued compellingly that it is likely to have had a basic meaning of ‘distancing’ (1995).

Nevertheless, *bandito* still appears in Conti's translation because the Sumerian *sa-gáz*, as well as Akkadian *ḥabātu*, are also widely attested with the specific meaning 'to rob' (see examples cited by Civil 2011: 253). In fact, it is likely that the two different meanings of *ḥabātu* can be explained by the existence of two homonyms which, despite apparently being etymologically unrelated, nevertheless share the same sumerogram.<sup>339</sup>

In 1954, Bottéro related a few different attempts to resolve these different meanings of *ḥabātu* into a unified etymology. Von Soden proposed two homonyms with the meanings "plündern" and "gehen" (*apud* Bottéro 1954: 143 n1). Landsberger, though, rather forcibly rejected that possibility on the basis that homonyms with two such meanings "gibt es in *keiner* Sprache!" (*apud* Bottéro 1954: 204; original emphasis).<sup>340</sup> Lewy suggested that wandering and plundering are to be logically connected, "As a passing army which crosses foreign territory is likely to plunder it; similarly a 'vagrant' (*ḥabbātum*) who 'wanders about' is a priori likely or is supposed to plunder it" (*apud* Bottéro 1954: 203). Bottéro himself surmised that the term originally meant "brigands", but then acquired a different connotation over time as those same groups of brigands became co-opted into an agricultural economy (1954: 146). Another idea came from Goetze, who suggested that "the assumption must be made that a pseudo-ideogram for *ḥabbātum* 'robber' was extended in its usage so as to cover *ḥabbātum* when denoting 'one who works for board and keep'. In fact, it might have been difficult to distinguish between the two" (*apud* Bottéro 1954: 163). Despite the cleverness of the two former solutions (the latter being quite bizarre), Von Soden's two-root explanation seems the

<sup>339</sup> This phenomenon is not unique to this instance. It is also represented in the case of *erēšu*, 'to cultivate' and *erēšu* 'to wish for', both of which are represented by the sumerogram URU4.

<sup>340</sup> Presumably Landsberger is referring to any *known* Semitic languages, but this still begs the question of whether or not that observation is relevant anyway. In fact, as will be pointed out below, it *does* seem to be the case for the Semitic root *nd(d)*.

most parsimonious. Complicating these debates was the fact that *ḥabātu* only appeared in lexical lists with the gloss of *sa-gáz* amongst agricultural workers, despite the fact that the very different meaning of ‘robbery’ is more widely attested.<sup>341</sup> This fact also explains the desire to unify all meanings into a single word. In fact, in only a single text, BIN VII 94, a legal text from Larsa drawn up during the reign of Abisarê, does the Akkadian word appear with what must be the agricultural connotation. Bottéro initially cited this text to argue that “Comme on ne saurait porter plainte de l’enlèvement de ‘brigands’, le second sens [of agricultural worker] de *ḥabbatu* semble ici assuré” (1954: 146 n1). His explanation of the text, however, is incomplete and, though it does seem to indicate the agricultural sense of *ḥabātu*, it also lends support the hypothesis proposed here that this term derives not directly from the root ‘to go’ but indirectly, through another derived meaning that *ḥabatu* is demonstrated as having: ‘to lend’ or, more specifically, ‘to lend as advanced payment for labor’.<sup>342</sup>

- 1    2 *a-wi-li-e*  
       *ḥa-ab-ba-ti-i*  
       *ša LU.IGI.SA<sub>6</sub>*  
       *ma-ma-an*
- 5    *i-ki-mu-šu*  
       *sà-al-li-ya*  
       *la ú-ki-in*  
       2/3 *ma-na kù.babbar*  
       *sà-al-li-ya*
- 10 *ì.l á.e*  
       Witnesses, etc.

<sup>341</sup> Other times, it appears only in lists organized by phonological similarity and thus without any semantic context.

<sup>342</sup> Thus, Goetze’s observation that this class did not receive payment for their labor: “The noun *ḥabbātum* then can mean ‘one who obtains his livelihood from somebody else, works for his livelihood’, i. e. without wages, merely for board and keep” (*apud* Bottéro 1954: 162). In fact, they had already received payment for labor that had not yet been rendered.



(6-7) (As) Saliya did not prove (1-3) (that) 2 men<sup>343</sup> (who are) *ḥabatī* of LU.IGI.SA (4-5) someone forcefully took from him, (8-10) (so) Saliya must pay (to LU.IGI.SA) 2/3 of a mina of silver.

The structure of the tablet rules out the possibility that Saliya is attempting to justify not reimbursing LUIGISA for property lost such as if these men were considered, for instance, a class of slave. In such a case, Saliya's argument that they were taken from him by force would have had no legal merit, judging from CH §125. This is contra Walters, who argued on that basis of CH §125 that "Since [Saliya] was unable to prove this, he was obliged to recompense Lu-igisa for the loss" (1970: 3). In fact, the law clearly states that Saliya would have been liable *even if* they had been taken from him by force. Furthermore, in such a case, we would identify LUIGISA as the accuser, which he is clearly not. Bottéro correctly identified Saliya as "l'accusateur" (1954: 146 n 1) in his commentary to this text, but he failed to explore the logical and legal implication of that fact—who is Saliya accusing, and of what is he accusing them? The text does not say he failed to prove that LUIGISA stole them, nor would that seem to make any sense given that they are described as being *ša* LUIGISA. The use of *mamman* clearly indicates that the kidnappers of these two men are unknown. Nevertheless, Saliya does seem to have brought the case against LUIGISA. If, however, we accept that in this instance the term is derived from the meaning "to borrow in advance", we may understand it thusly: 2 men took payment from LUIGISA for labor to be performed at a later date. It is necessary to assume that LUIGISA had an outstanding debt with Saliya. These two men were to pay

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<sup>343</sup> Despite the clear appearance of this numeral on the copy in BIN VII 94, Walters omits it in his transliteration without comment, noting that "the amount of the fine (2/3 'pound' = 40 shekels) does not permit us to deduce how many workers were involved", though he noted that in LE §54 and §56, the life of a free man was equivalent to this sum (Walters 1970: 3). The implication, that only a single man is involved, is untenable owing to the plural bound form of *awilum*, where, if singular, *awil* would be expected.

off LUIGISA's debt to Saliya, and consequently their own debts to LUIGISA simultaneously, by providing this labor to Saliya on LUIGISA's behalf. Saliya claims that this work was never done and LUIGISA's debt is still outstanding. Unfortunately for Saliya, the text indicates that he was unable to prove that the men were taken before they completed the work. Thus, the court found his claim against LUIGISA unjustified and he was penalized as we would expect according to CH §114: 1/3 mina for bringing a false claim. In this case, because there were two men involved, there were two counts of the same offense, and so double the penalty. If this proposed etymology is correct, then the term *sa-gáz* at Ebla, even if it referred to this definition of *ḫabātu*, carries with it no implication of robbery, brigandry, vagabondery, or mobility and, therefore does not support Fronzaroli (2003) and Catagnoli and Fronzaroli's (2010) implicit, impressionistic understanding of 'seminomadi'. It is, instead, simply a legal relationship arising from a particular type of loan or work arrangement. Context and an OB lexical list, however, both suggest the translation 'to rob, to raid' in this instance.

The final complication in Conti's translation is the error he makes, indirectly, of taking the primary meanings of the Akkadian homonyms as a single root, and then equating these with Semitic *nd(d)*. This error is particularly understandable. The semantic range of one *ḫabātu* meaning centers on distance, both spatial, from which the meanings such as 'go' and 'traverse' arise, and also chronological, from which the term for an advanced payment must also derive. The second root has the meaning of 'to rob'. The semantic range of the Semitic root *nd(d)* is very similar. It relates to distances that are both physical, but also moral (Greenberg 1995). Given the appearance of *na-du-um* in the Old Babylonian lexical list *lu ázlag B-C*, Segment 2 line 186 (MSL 12, 175 B r iii

23) where it appears as a gloss for *lú záh* (a synonym for *sa-gáz*; see below), which is glossed in the two immediately preceding lines by *ha-al-qum* and *mu-na-ab-tum*, the two terms appear to be nearly completely synonymous in this peculiarity.<sup>344</sup> Nevertheless, the amalgamation of both *ḥabātu* roots by the scholars Conti cited would seem to give the Akkadian words nearly the same semantic field. The shared gloss of this *ḥabātu*-chimaera and *nd(d)* with *sa-gáz* at Ebla, would seem to reinforce that equation. Thus, Conti was left with a rather awkward translation of ‘bandit’ in the sense of ‘migrant laborer’. Clearly, *na-ti-tum* should indeed be analyzed as /nadid-um/ and must relate to a Semitic root *nd(d)*. It seems likely that the root *nd(d)*, like *ḥabātu*, carried two unrelated meanings: distance and robbery. Whether a duality of meanings is implied in the Eblaite lexical entry or not, the meaning of robbery best fits the contexts where *sa-gáz* appears in Eblaite texts.<sup>345</sup>

Turning to the contexts of the sumerogram *sa-gáz* in the Ebla corpus, it appears only three times in published texts: in the chancellery text TM.75.G.4679+ (ARET XIII 14), in the Mari Treaty, TM.75.G.10195 (ARET XVI 30), and in an enigmatic text found outside the main archive, which seemingly includes a list of Eblaite kings in their reverse order, TM.74.G.120. It also appears once in an unpublished text cited only in brief passages, TM.75.G.2325, and, of course, in the bilingual lexical list mentioned above. In TM.75.G.4679+ (ARET XIII 14) and TM.75.G.10195 (ARET XVI 30), both chancellery texts, the meaning ‘to rob’ clearly fits the context. This fact is most easily established and appreciated through comparison of TM.75.G.10195, the Mari Treaty, dating near the

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<sup>344</sup> Conti, and other Ebla scholars, seem either to be unaware of this attestation or simply do not connect it with *na-ti-tum*.

<sup>345</sup> It is even possible that the original semantic overlap with the first meaning of *ḥabātu* actually led to a secondary development of the meaning ‘to rob’ for the root *nd(d)* at Ebla.

end of the period covered by the corpus, with the Abarsal Treaty, TM.75.G.2420 (ARET XIII 5), dating to near the very beginning of that period. The contexts under discussion in these two treaties involve clauses that essentially amount to laws, being broadly comparable in form and in many cases concept with ancient Near Eastern legal codes. Specifically, this discussion involves those clauses that relate to different kinds of theft. In this context the following sumerograms are encountered: zu<sub>h</sub>, za<sub>h</sub>, à ga-kár, and sa-gáz. A review of these contexts suggests first, that the meaning of za<sub>h</sub>, which Fronzaroli inaccurately translated as “mancano” (2003: 68), actually, through its relation to zu<sub>h</sub>, ‘to steal; theft’, can be demonstrated as meaning ‘to rob’. Second, owing to the pattern of its appearance relative to this term and to à ga-kár, which means ‘to seize’ or perhaps ‘to take in a raid’, deriving from its Sumerian meaning ‘to defeat; to conquer’, as well as the situation of its syntactic context, the term sa-gáz must be understood as having a very similar, if not identical meaning and connotation of ‘to take in a raid’.

In the Abarsal Treaty, zu<sub>h</sub> appears in two clauses, in lines v. XIV 1-3 and 15. The first clause deals with theft from specific places: the sheepfold, the gate, and the fortress. The second clause deals with theft occurring in the night, resulting in the loss of property of an Eblaite who is in the house of a man of Abarsal. Commensurate with the legal theory behind CH §125, that clause establishes that liability lays with the man from whose home the goods were taken. These clauses match well with a definition of theft, distinct from robbery, which is to say, theft through stealth, rather than violence or the threat of violence. The sumerogram za<sub>h</sub> appears in lines rev. VIII 11 and 16, a clause which includes the fact of personal violence and loss of property. This clause appears just after one dealing with violent murder. It also appears in line rev. XI 13, dealing with

sheep, beer, and oil, along with the sumerogram à g a-k ár. This implies that z à ĥ has the meaning ‘to rob’, which is to say ‘theft through violence’ as opposed to stealth, and also that à g a-k ár has a similar but distinct connotation, perhaps related to its Sumerian meaning ‘to defeat; to conquer’, thus meaning in this context ‘to take in a raid’.

Meanwhile, the Mari Treaty shows the following patterns of appearance of terms: z à ĥ appears first, in lines obv. VII 3 and 6, following clauses dealing with personal violence. This precedes clauses dealing with personal violence inflicted with a weapon, and the loss of property indicated through the sumerogram a l-b u<sub>x</sub>(PAD). The difference here is apparently to distinguish between robbery by simple assault and that with a deadly weapon. Following these, z u ĥ appears in lines obv. VIII 14 and 16 where the objects are sheep and oxen. Following that, s a-g á z appears in lines rev. I 2, 4 and 6. In this clause the objects of s a-g á z are sheep, oxen, mules, and asses and the penalty is the same as is assessed in the preceding clause with z u ĥ. This suggests that the semantic field of s a-g á z is similar to z u ĥ, but with a different connotation. The fact that à g a-k ár does not appear in this treaty, and s a-g á z does not appear in the Mari Treaty, and the fact that they occupy similar logical places in the list of crimes and punishments, further suggests that s a-g á z means ‘to rob’ specifically with the connotation of a raid or attack, as, for instance, on a village or homestead rather than robbery of a traveler or caravan. The context’s clear preference for this interpretation is furthermore made obvious by a reanalysis of Catagnoti and Fronzaroli’s translation of the final clauses of the Mari treaty. They analyze the lines thusly:

nu-zu ĥ  
15. 1 udu <5 udu>  
nu-zu ĥ  
1 g u<sub>4</sub>

5 gu<sub>4</sub>  
 rev. I. 1. ì-na-sum  
 sa-gáz

Per 1 pecora rubata <5 pecore>, per 1 bue rubato 5 buoi, un pastore  
 seminomade darà.

1 udu  
 sa-gáz  
 5. 1 gu<sub>4</sub>  
 sa-gáz  
 [1] BAR.AN 1 IGI.NITA  
 5-sù  
 ì-na-sum

Per 1 pecora un pastore, per 1 bue un pastore, per 1 mulo, per 1 asino, darà 5  
 volte tanto.

Fronzaroli and Catagnoti 2010: 189

This analysis clearly interrupts the pattern established in the preceding clauses: crime,  
 object, crime, object, penalty. The sa-gáz of line rev. I 2, though, clearly belongs to  
 following clause. Catagnoti and Fronzaroli's insistence on translating the sumerogram as  
 'seminomade,' established above as being untenable, obfuscates this pattern in their  
 translation. The lines should instead be translated as follows:

nu-zuh  
 15. 1 udu  
 nu-zuh  
 1 gu<sub>4</sub>  
 5 gu<sub>4</sub>  
 rev. I. 1. ì-na-sum!

Whoever steals 1 sheep, whoever steals 1 ox, 5 oxen will give.

sa-gáz  
 1 udu  
 sa-gáz  
 5. 1 gu<sub>4</sub>  
 sa-gáz  
 [1] BAR.AN 1 IGI.NITA  
 5-sù  
 ì-na-sum

(Whoever) robs 1 sheep, robs 1 ox, robs 1 mule, (or) 1 ass, five times he will pay.

Like the Mari Treaty, the chancellery text TM.75.G.4679+ (ARET XIII 14) also dates to near the end of the period covered by the Ebla corpus. The sumerogram *sa-gáz* appears there in lines obv. XI 5', 10', and 16':

XI. Approximately 2 cases missing.

- 1'. [X *na-se*<sub>11</sub>]  
*a-la-ga*<sup>ki</sup>  
*in*  
*ša-NE-u*<sub>4</sub><sup>ki</sup>  
5'. *sa-gáz*  
*2 na-se*<sub>11</sub>  
*Kab-lu*<sub>5</sub>-*ul*<sup>ki</sup>  
*in*  
*zà[r]-da*<sup>ki</sup>-*mu*<sup>ki</sup>  
10'. *sa-gáz*  
*1 na-se*<sub>11</sub>  
*NI-a-ra-bi-gu*<sup>ki</sup>  
*1 gír mar-tu-sù kù-gi*  
*in*  
15'. *NE-a-lu*<sup>ki</sup>  
*sa-gáz*  
*dur-ti*  
*ì-mar*<sup>ki</sup>  
[...]

[X people] of Alaga were robbed in ŠaNEu. 2 people of Kablul were robbed in Zardamu. 1 person of NIarabigu was robbed (of) his martu-knife (of) gold in NEalu. Durti (of) Emar...

XII. Top part of column missing.

- 1'. *en-ma*  
*ugula uru*<sup>ki</sup>

... thus (said) the ugula of the city:

- níg-sa*<sub>10</sub>  
*MURGU-ki*  
5'. *ì-mar*<sup>ki</sup>  
*áš-da*

*ib-la*<sup>ki</sup>  
še

The compensation (for) your plundered goods (for) Emar, from Ebla, is gain.

*en-ma*  
10'. *dur-ti*  
*i-mar*<sup>ki</sup>  
<sup>ʾ</sup>*a<sub>5</sub>-na*  
ugula

Thus (said) Durti (of) Emar to the ugula...

Unfortunately, these lines are part of an incompletely preserved section and this fact hampers a full understanding of the context. Nevertheless, the following facts are clear and support a translation of *sa-gáz* as 'to raid' or 'to rob' better than 'seminomade'. The nature of the passage where the term appears is of the pattern: persons of a place, in another place, *sa-gáz*. Lines r. XI 11'-16' include another object, a golden MAR.TU-knife. I contend, then, that these lines list victims of robberies, and in the last preserved case, the object lost. Presumably it was included for this case and not in the others because it was a particularly valuable item and, being gold, of particular interest to the central administration and its owner. The last two lines of this column before the break, possibly related, name an individual, Durti of Emar, who reappears in the next few cases in dialog with an ugula of 'the city,' presumably Ebla. This dialog, too, is incompletely preserved as the end of the tablet is in a poor state of preservation. Nevertheless, it is clear that the two are discussing some sort of remuneration. Durti is apparently unhappy that this remuneration will be given in the form of barley and seems to be invoking a justification for a different resolution. The resolution of this disagreement is lost in a lacuna. If this episode is of the same clause as the list in the preceding column, it is



possible to understand those individuals as requiring remuneration for robberies perpetrated against them. Their place of residence and the place in which the crime was committed is material to who is liable for these losses and to what extent, as per the sort of agreements shown in the Abarsal and Mari Treaties and the kind of legal tradition demonstrated by CH §23. Durti of Emar, then, is either pursuing personal interests or the collective interest of these individuals. Fronzaroli's argument that the sumerogram must be interpreted here as "nomadizziva" (2003: 158) finds support in his understanding of line obv. XII 4', which he transliterated as "murgu<sup>ki</sup>" (2003: 158). He proposed that this sumerogram is equivalent to *šēru*, 'the steppe' on the basis of its gloss with *za-lum* /*šarum*/ in the Sumerian bilingual lexical list. Interpreted broadly, he suggested this to indicate—in light of his identification of nomadism in the previous passage—the price for the use of pastureland. There are two reasons to reject this interpretation. First, other than its appearance in that lexical list, the term only ever appears in the entire Eblaite corpus once—in this particular passage. Second, it is equally possible to analyze the gloss *za-lum* as /*šallum*/, which is an Akkadian word meaning 'plundered' or 'captive,' a meaning which agrees perfectly with the understanding of *sa-gáz* proposed here. The appearance of *ki* on this line, which Fronzaroli takes as a place determinative, then could be easily understood as the second person feminine singular genitive ending, referencing Durti.<sup>346</sup> The meaning of this line should then be understood as "The compensation for your plundered goods (fem.), (for) Emar, from Ebla, is grain". The *ugula*, then, is referencing the fact that because Durti is from Emar, a fact established in lines obv. XI 17' and 18', immediately prior to the first lacuna, her compensation takes the form of grain, presumably because such an agreement specifying Ebla's liability exists between it

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<sup>346</sup> On the form of this name and its feminine characteristics, see Fronzaroli 1987: 64.

and Emar, such as those agreements which are preserved in the Abarsal and Mari Treaties. Quite possibly, Durti is upset by the fact that a rather portable item is being replaced with an inconveniently large amount of grain and is appealing for a more convenient replacement.

The apparent king list of Ebla, TM.74.G.120, is the final place, beyond the bilingual lexical list, where the sumerogram *sa-gáz* appears in fully edited, published texts from the Ebla corpus. Its appearance there inspired Bonechi to posit a semi-nomadic royal ideology at Ebla (2001). His argument is based on the reading of case obv. V 2 as “*sa-gáz é g*” and its translation as “wanderers of the (land of the) levee(s)” following a list of five possible personal names, following a case that seems to record the toponym Ebla, but without place determinative, following a list of twenty-six personal names which appears in all likelihood to be a list of the kings of Ebla in reverse chronological order, beginning with Išar-Damu (2001). Following the line including *sa-gáz*, the tablet contains a further thirty-three personal names organized on the basis of their initial element, and without any clear association with the ruling family of Ebla. Bonechi’s hypothesis that TM.74.G.120 communicates a royal ideology of semi-nomadic origins suffers from two complications. First, it is based on the assumption that the five names preceding *sa-gáz é g* belong with the preceding, ostensibly reverse chronological list of Eblaite kings. Although the association of *sa-gáz é g* with the preceding five names does seem likely, the association of these names with the list of twenty-six apparent kings is unclear, especially in light of the fact that thirty-three other names, which make up half of the tablet, are also apparently unrelated and certainly not chronological. More importantly, Bonechi’s understanding of case obv. V 2 is also not

the only interpretation that can be offered, and not even the most likely. He derived his translation of *s a-gáz* from *nd(d)*, as discussed above, from which he takes the meaning ‘to wander’. It is, however, clear by now that this Semitic root had the more basic meaning of ‘distance,’ very possibly with a derived meaning of something like ‘to go’ or ‘to wander’, but also possibly simply ‘to be distant’. Furthermore, as has been demonstrated, it very definitely had the meaning of ‘to rob,’ or more specifically ‘to raid’. He interpreted *E* as *ég*, and translated ‘levee’. This is indeed an attested meaning elsewhere in Sumerian texts, but it would appear here at Ebla as a hapax legomenon. It is attested more commonly in the Eblaite corpus as a kind of object, perhaps a furnishing (Catagnoti 1989: 179 n139), though more recently Fronzaroli (2003: 105) and Catagnoti and Fronzaroli (2010: 75) have proposed a tentative translation of ‘cash’. Whether it always carries the connotation of a fungible object is not clear, though in TM.75.G.2039 (ARET XVI 9) it is associated with a payment made from silver (Catagnoti and Fronzaroli 2010: 72). The most obvious translation of this line, then, would be “robbers of money”. It must be stressed that any connection between this list of names has a connection to the preceding kings of Ebla is purely speculative. Bonechi assumed that these individuals were semi-nomadic progenitors of the Eblaite kings. It remains a possibility that there is a connection, and that a different royal ideology is indicated. A semi-nomadic connection could not be ruled out, as expressed variously above, although the relationship is far from exclusive, robbery and raiding are ethnohistorically attested as economic pursuits complementary to a mobile pastoral subsistence strategy. Nevertheless, there is nothing about or within TM.74.G.120 to suggest any connection between these two sets of names, let alone an ideology of semi-nomadic origins.

Bonechi's interpretation was based on two misinterpretations which seemed to support an unfounded speculation.

In summary, three facts argue in favor of the translation 'to rob' for the sumerogram sa-gáz in the Ebla texts. First, the term is well-attested with this meaning in contemporary and slightly later Sumerian documents. Second, an OB lexical list records *na-du-um* as a Semitic gloss for *lú zàḥ*, a synonym of sa-gáz, in a context where it carries a connotation of robbery. Misunderstandings of the significance of this term relate to curious etymological features of the Akkadian root *habātum* and a widely attested Semitic root *nd(d)*, both derived in part from a fundamental meaning of 'distance' but both also carrying a meaning 'to rob'. Third, this translation fits the contexts in which it appears in the Ebla corpus much more easily than nomad, semi-nomad, pastoralist, or tribespeople and also appeals more directly to an internal logic detectable between portions of the Abarsal and Mari Treaties which serves to relate sa-gáz with àga-kár.<sup>347</sup>

#### *Conclusion: Segmentary Lineage Systems and the royal archives of Ebla*

Although there have been voices that have argued against the identification of mobile pastoral elements in the Ebla archives (e.g. Milano 1995: 1222), the tendency within Ebla studies is overwhelmingly to identify such groups using a myriad of different kinds of evidence assumed to correlate with impressionistic and implicit models of mobile pastoral sociopolitical features, especially segmentation. While individual arguments have been contested before, this is the first time these arguments have been

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<sup>347</sup> The sumerogram sa-gáz also occurs in the unedited and incompletely published text TM.75.G.2325 (Bonechi 1998: 525 n353). As reported there by Bonechi, though, the relevant lines are too incomplete to support any specific analysis.

investigated by reference to an explicit, ethnographically derived model of mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems, as was developed in Chapters 2 and 3. This review suggests that in most cases, the nature of the evidence marshaled to support the identification of ‘tribal’ or mobile pastoral sociopolitical elements in the Ebla texts is at best ambiguous and interpretations of data drawn in support of mobile pastoral sociopolitical characteristics or groups in the Ebla archives often ignore complicating evidence. Most specific arguments seem, instead, to have been inspired primarily by the presupposition that such groups did exist around Ebla at that time and, so, must appear somewhere in the archives.

The evidence cited in support of the identification of mobile pastoral units concerns primarily groups of people indicated either by toponym or some other group name. Those toponyms most commonly cited include Martu, Ibal, DU and DADAnu. Here it is maintained that Martu and Martum are two different polities, the former being more clearly attested as a polity in the western Jezireh, near the Euphrates, probably downstream of the Big Bend region, in the area of Jebel Bishri. The argument that Martu indicates a mobile pastoral community seems to have been inspired by later associations between the sumerogram MAR.TU and the association of that term with a group of people known as Amurru, who scholars traditionally associated with mobile pastoralism and ‘tribalism’. This topic will be taken up in the following chapter. The only aspect of the model of segmentary lineage systems and mobile pastoralism that seems to apply to Martu is a preponderance of sheep. Contradictory evidence would seem to be indicated by the presence of an internal hierarchical political system similar to that of Ebla in all other respects. For instance, as indicated by the presence of a king and elders of Martu.

This may, however, result from interpretation of a different sociopolitical structure by the Eblaite administration. A better case cannot be made for the polity known as Ibal. There, multiple ens are noted at a single time and an internal document purportedly from Ibal also indicates a plurality of leadership. This seems to indicate a segmentary political structure, though not necessarily a segmentary lineage nature, especially considering the expectation of a certain kind of political segmentation in EBA Syrian polities described above. The polity known as DU suggests a similar kind of segmentation, but it is barely attested in the corpus at all. Similarly, DADAnu, attested only twice in the archives, offers no evidence of a tribal character of any kind. The assumption that it should be equated with the Tidnum, attested in the Ur III period and commonly assumed to have a tribal character, on the basis of its appearance next to Martu in a list of dispersed goods is speculative and, in any event, not likely relevant in light of the understanding of Martu offered here. The appearance of an individual named Šuragarru, along with his brothers, among the polities of the lists in ARET I 1-9 is perhaps the most significant possible evidence for a segmentary system made on the basis of kinship, but no positive nor other complementary evidence exists to make this designation. If his enigmatic appearance can be explained by reference to a segmentary lineage system it is not inconsequential to note that he is unique in his appearance in the documents of ARET I 1-9. Quite possibly the form with which he appears there derives from specific features of sociopolitical organization in EBA Syria, perhaps attributable to the fact that polities were not necessarily geographically consolidated.<sup>348</sup>

The remainder of the evidence for mobile pastoral or ‘tribal’ populations in the Ebla corpus regards mobile pastoral groups less as monolithic sociopolitical units and

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<sup>348</sup> On this point, see the following excursus.

more as a cultural or social subset of society as a whole. This includes Fronzaroli's, Catagnoti's, and Bonechi's interpretations of the terms KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, *da-mu*, *li-im*, and *sa-gáz*. Briefly, the first three terms may have had special significance for mobile pastoral units at Mari in the MBA, but it is not possible to simply project these later sociopolitical and cultural characteristics onto the Ebla corpus without corroborating evidence. The KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU and *da-mu* are clearly work groups of some kind with an association with the central administration, however no clear indication of a mobile pastoral, let alone segmentary lineage character exists. The *da-mu* are barely attested, while the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU are commonly involved with irrigation works, transportation, and warfare. The latter two associations could suggest the possibility of a mobile pastoral character and the actions of the KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU in the incompletely understood text TM.76.G.669 (ARET XVI 19, Fronzaroli 1998 no. 27-29) could be read as supporting evidence as well, but there is simply not enough data to come to a clear conclusion on their sociopolitical character. The interpretation of the term *sa-gáz*, on the other hand, as a mobile pastoral group, is very definitely to be rejected, as argued here, in favor of its attested significance in Mesopotamian texts to mean 'robber'. Arguments for a mobile pastoral ideology for the origin of the Ebla dynasty, then, fall simply upon the observations of a *ya-* to *yi-* morphemic transition in the onomasticon, associated with Amorite linguistic features. There is, of course, no essential reason why such a shift should accompany a distinction between sedentary and mobile pastoral societies in the Ebla archives, even if it can be demonstrated that there are Amorite speakers who practice a 'tribal' lifestyle.

There is, then, unsurprisingly some amount of ambiguity in the Ebla archives relating to the presence of mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems either as

independent polities in the sociopolitical and cultural landscape of the period covered by the Ebla corpus, or as a cultural undercurrent or source of historical heritage.

Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, evidence marshaled to support these hypotheses can be rejected outright. Only in a few specific instances can this notion be entertained, and even then it cannot be pursued far because of an absence of relevant data. There are many reasons why evidence of segmentary lineage systems might not have been identified in this review. First, the necessary evidence might not have been recorded in the Ebla archives, for various reasons, possibly because such groups were not very numerous, or were not economically, politically, or culturally very important. Second, it may not have been recorded in a way that permits its discrimination from other polities with different sociopolitical characteristics. Third, while it is undeniable that pastoralism played a significant role in the economy of Syria at least during the period covered by the Ebla corpus and probably throughout the third millennium, it is possible that there were simply no mobile pastoral groups. In any case, the impression gained by this review is that there is little evidence that can be marshaled from the Ebla corpus to support the existence of mobile pastoral groups or segmentary lineage systems within the geographical and chronological extent of the Ebla corpus.

### **Late Early Bronze Age Texts from Syria**

Other EBA texts in Syria derive from the last two to three centuries from urban centers that either collapsed or experienced a significant shift in their settlement character in the Khabur Triangle region of northeastern Syria, and also from Mari on the lower Syrian Euphrates. These texts bear witness to the presence of administrative systems and



political hierarchies, both indigenous and imposed at this time. None of the evidence speaks directly to mobile pastoralism. Approximately forty tablets attributed to a pre-Sargonic period are known from various find spots at Mari (Charpin 1987, 1990). Although the toponym MAR.TU seems to occur in one of these (Charpin 1987: 74, no. 9), relevant to the discussion above, no useful information relating to the possibility of mobile pastoral practices can be gleaned from these. Texts from the *šakkanakku* period, though possibly technically of an EBA date, in part (cf. Durand 1985: 147 n.1), relate to a poorly understood period of history with implications for the MBA nature of this city. As such, they have been omitted from this study. From Tell Brak, 79 texts have been excavated that date to the EBA (Eidem et al. 2001). Nearly all of these texts can be dated on either physical or stratigraphic criteria to a period of Akkadian administration of the site, or later. They do not represent organized archival corpora and offer essentially no information relevant to the discussion of segmentary lineage systems in this chapter. Similarly, EBA tablets have been excavated at Tell Leilan, consisting of an Early Sargonic and Late Sargonic group (Milano 2007). Like the Tell Brak texts, these too are incompletely preserved and offer no compelling information relating to segmentary lineage systems or mobile pastoralism. Finally, Tell Mozan offers more tablets and fragments than Brak or Leilan, dating from an earlier and later Sargonic period (Milano 1991) and including administrative tablets. Although the later tablets appear too incomplete to yield useful data, the forty-some fragments and two complete tablets from the earlier period have yet to be published (see Sallaberger 2011: 337).

## **Conclusion**

Very little evidence relative to the existence of mobile pastoral polities, let alone specifically segmentary lineage systems, exists in EBA Syrian texts. What little does exist derives from the corpus of cuneiform texts excavated at the site of Tell Mardikh, but this is not compelling and has been overstated. The Ebla texts, though, are not the only source of information relevant to the discussion of the existence of mobile pastoral groups or segmentary lineage systems in Syria during the EBA. Pre-Sargonic, Sargonic, Ur III, and even later Akkadian and Sumerian texts from southern Mesopotamia are also relevant to this inquiry, especially those where the writing MAR.TU appears and those that suggest an association between this writing with a group called the Amorites, popularly interpreted to exhibit many ‘tribal’ characteristics in the Ur III period and later, and especially well-attested during the Old Babylonian period. Following a short discourse relating to principles structuring the political hierarchy of Ebla, it is these Mesopotamian texts and especially the relationship between MAR.TU, Amurru, and ‘tribalism’, that will be addressed in Chapter 8.

## **Excursus**

### **Two Principles Structuring Political Integration at Ebla**

It is not my intention here to present an exhaustive study of the sociopolitical system of Ebla as it is reflected in the texts of the royal archives, but rather to produce a summary, after which I will undertake a synthetic survey of the two primary and partially opposing theories on the form and nature of that system: the urban-rural dichotomy model espoused by Alfonso Archi and the patrimonial model proposed by David Schloen. It is my position that the texts of the royal archives do not fully support either of these models, but, in fact, contradict them in some aspects and suggest a third model. This third model is similar to the latter two in many respects, but differs on the whole and, inasmuch as it explains an aspect of political segmentation in that society, carries broader implications for the study of ‘tribalism’ and role of segmentary lineage systems in the historical trajectory of the EBA of Syria and northern Mesopotamia. It also has implications for the nature of the enigmatic groups of individuals called the ‘elders’, or ábba. ábba.

Ebla, as a regional state, has been described as extending from the Plain of Antioch in the west, to the Jabbul Plain in the east, and spanning roughly two hundred kilometers north to south from Carchemish to Hama (Archi 1992: 24). Thousands of different place names are attested in the Ebla archives. These correspond both to the area just described and also to places much more widely dispersed including apparently southern Mesopotamia and the Transtigris region. The approximate or precise locations of some of these toponyms, usually the largest and most important, are often known, but the vast majority appear only a handful of times in published texts and are, at best, only

identifiable as being between Ebla and another center, or within a particular region in Syria or Northern Mesopotamia. Sometimes these places seem to fall within the political control of the Eblaite administration and are to be considered as a part of the state, but often their relationship is unclear, as are the boundaries of Eblaite influence, which are sure to have shifted over the period documented by the texts. As Biga has noted, “if it is difficult to locate the kingdoms of Syria and Mesopotamia at the time of the Ebla archives, it is even more difficult to define the borders of the kingdom of Ebla and to know how many cities and towns it contained...” (2013: 260). As the following discussion of the sociopolitical system of the Eblaite polity will show, however, the search for physical borders may to some extent be a misguided retrojection of assumptions drawn from the modern nation-state. At Ebla, the boundaries of the state may have been more easily defined in socioeconomic—as opposed to strictly geographical—terms. Nevertheless, following from the Ebla corpus, it is clear that the interactions of the central administration with individuals and other polities can be divided into both a domestic and international category.

The royal archives of Ebla were created both by and for a highly centralized bureaucracy concerned with tracking the collection and disbursement of alimentary, textile, and metal goods from various sources, to various persons, both inside and outside of its administrative bureaucracy. As such, it can be expected that the activities it records reflect the sociopolitical and economic realities that existed both within and outside of the Eblaite polity in Syria and northern Mesopotamia more generally when those records were created. It is important to remember, however, that the royal archives of Ebla are nevertheless limited in their scope in this regard, to the extent that their function was

limited. Thus, a great deal of ambiguity necessarily characterizes any attempt to define the sociopolitical context in which the documents were created. Furthermore, the dynamic and diachronic nature of both this context and the archive itself must be remembered. Although the period spanned by the archives is limited to, at most, just five decades, there is nevertheless bureaucratic and sociopolitical change indicated in the documents over that span of time (Archi 2010: 8). Previous attempts at defining the sociopolitical system of Ebla as a particular ‘type’ have tended to imply a static nature to that system, and, moreover, have relied heavily on analogies to later periods, especially the Late Bronze Age (LBA). This has the potential of introducing anachronisms into any understanding of the sociopolitical system.

The evidence of the details of Ebla’s interaction in two realms of interaction—both domestic and international—represented in the royal archives of Ebla, correlates with the conditions widely thought to obtain during the Late Bronze Age (LBA) as evidenced in the Amarna correspondence (e.g. Liverani 2003) and in LBA archives from Alalakh, Ugarit, and Emar (e.g. Steinkeller 1996: 300). This observation has led Steinkeller to propose the basic outlines of a Northern Babylonian or “northern Syrian model” of socioeconomic system whereby a palace administration as well as independent nuclear families possessed and cultivated arable land, as opposed to the situation obtaining in southern Babylonia, where virtually all arable land was controlled by large temple-estates (Steinkeller 1996: 300-301; see also Stein 2004). The Ebla archives do seem to make clear that the en exercised economic control over the temples located in the city of Ebla (Archi 1992: 25), although the existence and situation of other households as independent units of production in the Eblaite polity and the means by which they were integrated into

the polity is not clear from the archives. It is these two issues which lie at the heart of the issue of the sociopolitical system of Ebla. Its resolution is made difficult by the fact that the archives are almost exclusively limited to the economic concerns of the palace administration and are, therefore, largely mute on this issue.

Nevertheless, two different models of this sociopolitical situation have been offered, both drawing inferences from a wider ancient Near Eastern background. Alfonso Archi has suggested that the sociopolitical system of Ebla was characterized by a bifurcation into two primary classes: an urbanized population of full-time palace dependents and scattered rural agriculturalists who supplied either taxes, part-time corvée labor, or some combination of the two to the central administration. Judging from information in the archives, Archi has argued that “the number of persons residing in Ebla, dependent upon the Palace or indirectly bound to it, was about 20,000 individuals, which surely made up the majority of the population in the city” (1992: 25; cf. Archi 1993: 49). Rural producers, by contrast, inhabited agricultural villages scattered throughout Ebla’s territory. He maintained that these were likely to have hosted independent households nonetheless obliged to contribute labor or goods, on some level, to the royal household (Archi 1992: 27-28; 1993: 49). He attributed this dichotomy, as he called it, of hyper-centralized authority at the center of the state and relative independence on its edges to the phenomenon of extensive agricultural production, as opposed to the intensive and therefore less autonomous model of agricultural production in southern Mesopotamia:

It was the type of agriculture practiced, that is, over extended areas of land, which guaranteed the individual villages a certain degree of autonomy from the Palace. This archaic phase in the history of the formation of the state presents a

dichotomy: maximum concentration of power at the center of the structure and maintenance of the original social organization of the territory.

Archi 1992: 28

David Schloen has criticized Archi's dichotomous model of the Eblaite sociopolitical system for being based upon "Diakonoff's two-sector 'Asiatic mode of production' model," the validity of which he has challenged not only for Ebla but for the ancient Near East as a whole:

The implication is of a clear sociological separation, in terms of both way of life and ethos or ideology, between rural peasants and urban dwellers. No thought is given to the possibility that this dichotomy is an illusion fostered by the modern concept of urbanism.

Schloen 2001: 267

Instead, Schloen offered a patrimonial household model of social and political relationships in the ancient Near East for the Bronze Age. He justified this model by recourse to the same rationale adopted in this dissertation regarding the reality of segmentary lineage systems in Chapters 2 and 3: "... because it conforms to the native understanding of the social order" (2001: 256). In other words, Schloen detected the language of these relationships in the documentation of the Bronze Age (e.g. 2001: 255). He included Ebla in this model, at least during the period covered by the royal archives:

... it is likely that the 'house of the king' (É EN), incorporating the subordinate households of royal princes and high officials within it, was believed to encompass the entire kingdom, including rural villages, so that everyone was, in one way or another, a royal dependent.

Schloen 2001: 268

Schloen found support for his argument of royal ownership of all the land at Ebla by virtue of documents that seem to indicate the transfer in ownership (or control) of villages, understood to be unified, in their entirety, as individual 'households' or 'estates' (é)—i.e. productive units—to various members of the royal administration. Sometimes

these estates are qualified with reference to their total land area, but often they are not, implying a totality of ownership. Often estates of explicitly royal ownership are transferred.<sup>349</sup> Nevertheless, Schloen felt compelled to mediate the despotic power of the en in practice, surmising that most of these dependents are best thought of as possessing “customary hereditary rights as sharecroppers of the land they worked” (2001: 269). In other words, they were engaged in providing goods and/or services for the central administration on a part-time basis only, and, likewise, engaging in the redistributive system recorded in the royal archives for only part of their subsistence, the rest being met through independent subsistence and economic strategies, including what was essentially private agricultural and horticultural production, even if “...the impression we get is that the king owned all the land, at least in theory” (Schloen 2001: 268).

Despite these differences, both models have a point in common: the assumption of a single ideological source for the en’s power and the political cohesion of the polity. Although Archi and Schloen differ in exactly how this mechanism operated, they seem to be in broad agreement about the foundation of that system: the theoretically despotic power of the en within his own ‘household’. For Archi this power is mediated only by distance from the bureaucratic center of the polity while Schloen assumes a degree of ideological mediation, for apparently arbitrary reasons—something must mediate it. This raises the question of whether or not the sociopolitical system, at least at Ebla, was

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<sup>349</sup> Given that the royal archives are limited in their scope to the economic interests of the palace household, though, it is possible to argue that, even if ownership or control of entire villages is being given out by the en, there may have existed villages where some or all of the productive capacity was not subject to such royal authority. In this case, absolute measures of the size of the territory belonging to these estates might be instructive. Unfortunately, disagreement surrounds the size of the GÁNA.KESDA.KI, the unit of area measure utilized at Ebla. Schloen (2001: 272) has argued that it is roughly equivalent to one Sumerian iku, or about 0.36 hectares, while Archi (2006b: 18) maintained that it is roughly equivalent to one-tenth this size. According to Schloen’s understanding, then, accounts of land areas in villages where plots are subdivided could account for all of the surrounding arable land, whereas by Archi’s measure, there is much more room to hypothesize the existence of plots independent from this royal ownership.



indeed driven by a single ideology. In fact, I argue that the evidence from the archives, though ambiguous and sparse, suggests the contemporaneous existence of two different ideological systems structuring political relationships during the period recorded by texts. To some extent this returns to the question of whether or not there were ‘private’ households within the Eblaite polity. The royal archives might not be expected to explicitly record the existence of ‘independent’ land-holdings, at least not as explicitly as those under the control of the royal administration, as these would interact with the palace in an economically, bureaucratically, and legally different way than those which were subject to this royal authority. And if some ‘houses’ were not subject to the same kind of authority the en is shown to exercise in the royal archives—that which corresponds in broad strokes to the patrimonial household model, a model which, as stated above, can define the boundaries of the polity in socio-political terms—this then raises the difficult question of how ‘independent’ households then relate to the Eblaite polity at all, and what it means to be a part of that polity. Archi’s model suggests that the polity is integrated simply by bureaucratic control: “It is difficult to view the development of a city-state and, later a regional state as anything other than the gradual superimposition of a kind of bureaucratic organisation on a population that has settled in villages” (2006b: 16). Schloen’s model may appear elegant in its avoidance of this difficulty, but it still suffers from two serious shortcomings.

First, it must be pointed out that the language of the patrimonial household model, the most important criterion by which Schloen justified the use of a model in later periods, does not exist in the Ebla archives, beyond the simple use of ‘house’ (é) to refer to a socioeconomic unit. To be fair, this may simply be because of the terse and difficult

nature of the Ebla texts. It may, however, also be the result of real sociopolitical differences extant between these places and periods. This leads to the second shortcoming of Schloen's approach: his retrojection of the patrimonial household model onto Ebla suffers from the assumption that the sociopolitical organization of Syria and northern Mesopotamia was more or less unchanged over the passage of a millennium. Archi's model, though making no explicit appeal to later periods, nonetheless implicitly suffers from the same flaw. Indeed, the very possibility of any different system of sociopolitical organization obtaining at any point before the Iron Age (IA) seems to be precluded from Schloen's thinking simply on the basis of his adaptation of Eisenstadt's model of Near Eastern sociopolitical systems (e.g. 2001: 52). Eisenstadt, adopting Jespers' terminology (1953), made a chronological distinction between pre-Axial, Axial, and post-Axial societies. Only the former two types concern this discussion. The primary difference between pre-Axial and Axial societies is that the former are limited to "some fusion of sacred and primordial criteria and traditional charismatic modes of legitimation," (Eisenstadt 1986: 6), whereas the latter types are characterized by the intellectual development of 'rational' modes of legitimation (Eisenstadt 1986, especially 20-21). The pre-Axial system of legitimation can be termed, then, 'traditional,' and in the case of the ancient Near East 'patrimonial', while Axial systems can be termed 'legal-rational' and 'bureaucratic' (cf. Schloen 2001: 52, 255). According to Schloen, this patrimonial household system, either literally or metaphorically, must govern sociopolitical relationships and justify political hierarchies: "...if Bronze Age Near Eastern society was fundamentally patrimonial rather than bureaucratic, as I suggest (following Weber and Eisenstadt), then traditional 'kinship' relationships alone provided

the organizing principles of the entire society” (2001: 70). The only alternative, Schloen stated, “is to see the basis for administration and social integration either in a rationalized bureaucracy..., or in a form of feudalism...” (2001: 53). The language of Jespers and Eisenstadt implies an evolutionary relationship between pre-Axial and Axial societies. This situation harkens back to the evolutionary models, especially that of Morgan, who drew a similar distinction between *societies* and *civitas*—kinship and the state—as discussed in Chapter 2. The “Axial System” is, however, somewhat more nuanced in that it posits the growth of rationalized bureaucracy out of a traditional system such that hybrid societies must have existed. Schloen suggested that

the emergence of a new kind of Near Eastern ‘world empire’ on an unprecedented scale during the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Iran-based Achaemenid regimes may reflect the development of certain forms of practically rationalized administration within a patrimonial framework.

Schloen 2001: 52

Nevertheless, an evolutionary relationship, and necessarily the implicit assumption that patrimonial sociopolitical structures *must* account for interpersonal and inter-political relationships before this period follows from these premises. Schloen’s model demands that at least until the dawn of the Axial Age, in the ancient Near East, “we should not assume *a priori* that bureaucracy, in anything like the modern sense, was present at all, or that governmental administration was anywhere conducted on anything but a purely patrimonial basis” (2001: 53). Schloen seems guilty of his own *a priori* bias here. Why must ancient Near Eastern society and its historical trajectories be treated as a monolithic whole with only a single developmental trajectory? Why must there only be a single ideology applied to all political relationships? As was reviewed in Chapter 5, the archaeological record bears clear evidence of periods of alternating urbanization and

ruralization in the ancient Near East since the Chalcolithic, a phenomenon which implies continuously changing, and perhaps competing, ideological systems of power.

In fact, the texts of the royal archives of Ebla bear witness to two kinds of political relationships. One kind is mediated, as Schloen described, by a patrimonial household model. In this model dependent individuals are somehow associated with a private estate (é) which puts them, necessarily, in a subordinate relationship to the head of that household. The texts make clear that the en of Ebla derived his political power in no small part from his position at the head of a large and powerful household, possibly at the apex of a hierarchy of subservient households. This provided the economic and perhaps martial bases of power to complement the ideological base. All the individuals engaged in that structure of consolidated estates clearly belonged to what might be termed the Eblaite polity. These relationships might also be characterized as being domestic, as opposed to the international relationships that existed between major centers such as Nagar, Mari or Kish and which are attested in a few early treaties. As stated above, this also implies that the boundaries of that polity are defined primarily in sociopolitical terms. The definition of those boundaries are, however, somewhat more nuanced still because there is no indication that international relationships, whether of parity or subordination, are couched in terms of the patrimonial household model, even if individuals within those households shared consanguineous connections. Instead, these relationships seem to be dictated and mediated simply by physical or economic force, or by oath, i.e. contract—an arbitrary legal agreement. This carries an important further implication: some individuals that can be characterized as a part of the Eblaite polity nonetheless existed *outside* of the system of the patrimonial authority of the en. In other

words, there were households within the Eblaite polity that did not necessarily fall into the formal, patrimonial hierarchy subsumed by the royal household.

The leaders of such households at Ebla, and other contemporary polities, might be indicated by the term *á b b a. á b b a*, discussed in the preceding chapter. There is evidence in the Ebla corpus to suggest that their particular status as the leaders of independent households, nevertheless integrated into the Eblaite polity, was mediated by a different ideological basis than the mitigation of the patrimonial metaphor by either geographic distance from the core of the Eblaite polity or competition from other traditional ideological sources of ‘kinship’.<sup>350</sup> The clearest such evidence comes from as yet unpublished texts that have been cited, in passing, in published studies, particularly “Zur Organisation der Arbeit in Ebla” (Archi 1988). Of particular interest to this issue are about twenty lists of monthly disbursements of textiles by the central administration which refer to elders that are qualified as “dem Joch zugeordneten Ältesten” (Archi 1988: 136; “*á b b a. á b b a a l<sub>6</sub>-d a b<sub>5</sub> GIŠ-sur<sub>x</sub>*”). Originally, Archi interpreted this to mean those elders literally at the chariot of the en, in light of TM.75.G.2460, which lists eleven individuals qualified in this way, followed by thirty-three more elders, qualified as *n í g- k a s<sub>4</sub>*, or “Älteste der Reise” (1988: 136), but literally known now to mean ‘(military) expedition’ (Biga 2008: 311).<sup>351</sup> More recently he has translated the term as “elders who

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<sup>350</sup> Schwartz has suggested previously that the existence of the groups of elders in both third and second millennia contexts demonstrates “the simultaneous existence of several kinds of institutionalized power in historic period Syria and Mesopotamia and the struggle between kingship and class-based units” (1994a: 166). Here it is maintained that there is no particular difference in the ideological structures governing the position of either king or elders, at least in the third millennium, and no reason to assume any such ideological struggle from these two institutions, only that political relationships between them could appeal to more than a single ideological basis.

<sup>351</sup> Other texts, including TM.75.G.1743, qualify a large group of *á b b a* “*in SA.ZA<sub>x</sub><sup>ki</sup>*”, indicating their location in the administrative core of Ebla (cf. Archi 1988: 136). This probably indicates that they were in residence there. On the other hand in TM.75.G.2328 a group of elders is qualified as *me-se<sub>11</sub> u ru<sup>ki</sup>-u ru<sup>ki</sup>*, suggesting either their present location or their provenance (cf. Archi 1988: 136). There is no reason why

reside (alongside) the throne (of the king)” (2006b: 17). Another interpretation of these two terms is possible, however, and carries implications for the ideological foundation of the sociopolitical organization of the Eblaite polity. It has been recognized that the term *GIŠ-sur<sub>x</sub>* itself has a special meaning beyond its association with chariotry hardware, where it carries the meaning ‘double yoke’ (on this meaning see Conti 1997: 40). Milano has suggested its metaphorical use to indicate a verb meaning “aggiogare” or ‘to yoke’, with the meaning of to bind with an oath or join in a pact, with reference to an image of two individuals joined side-by-side, i.e. a double-yoke (1999: 139 n. 26). This suggests, then, that the former group of elders was qualified as being “of the pact,” or being joined with the en of Ebla by means of some formalized agreement, while those ‘of the expedition’ may have been those who were forcefully subjugated into the Eblaite polity. In fact, at Ebla there is a well-attested practice by which independent polities bound themselves in oaths of political and, perhaps, economic subservience to one another. This use has been clearly indicated in a few of the chancellery texts, including ARET XIII 7, 19, and 21, where Fronzaroli has suggested its use parallel to the Akkadian *rakāsu*, ‘to bind oneself (in a pact)’ (2003: 198; see also ARET XVI 27, Catagnoti and Fronzaroli 2010). In these instances the verb indicated by *GIŠ-sur<sub>x</sub>* is clearly associated with an oath taken in the temple of Kura at Ebla, between both individuals and leaders of independent polities, and is associated with the ‘oil offering’ (*i-gi š*), or fealty oath. This is the case both between Ebla and Mari, a relationship that is known to have inverted near the end of the period recorded by the royal archives in TM.75.G.10195 (ARET XVI 30), but also between Ebla and Abarsal in TM.75.G.2420 (ARET XIII 5), Martu in

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leaders of independent households could not have been found to be living both near the geographic core of the Eblaite polity and further away, contra Archi’s hypothesis of coterminous bureaucratic and geographical boundaries to central authority.

TM.75.G.5784+ (ARET XIII 20), and Ibal in TM.75.G.1626 (ARET XIII 11), independent polities who were either forced or coerced into such a situation.

The argument offered here is that independent households within the Eblaite polity were, essentially, independent polities that entered into the Eblaite polity in a more or less voluntary fashion. These were perhaps more geographically and economically intertwined with the central administration than other independent polities, however, especially over time, and as a result had more congenial political relationships with the central administration that were, nonetheless, mediated by a similar ideological mechanism to integrate them with the central polity. The metaphorical use of the *GIŠ-sur<sub>x</sub>*, or double-yoke, then, to indicate this relationship implies a certain legal parity or equality that would make sense in a situation where two independent households, of theoretical legal parity, come to a legal agreement, even if the terms of that agreement are unequal. The double-yoke is a metaphorical device that binds together independent households. The polity of Ebla, then, was not defined solely by the vertical integration of nested households on a patrimonial basis—a segmentary structure that evokes a segmentary lineage system—though such households may have constituted its basic foundation and/or most fundamental unit. The double-yoke bridged the gap between households and bound them together into a united political entity.

The sociopolitical system obliquely indicated in the Ebla texts suggests the possibility that at some point in the EBA prior to the period covered by this archive the sociopolitical landscape of Syria and northern Mesopotamia was made up primarily of independent households which, through economic and political competition over time, coalesced into super-polities of nested households such as is evident in the house of the

en at Ebla. In this model, related or otherwise allied households might retain their independence over time, but nonetheless shared political interests and fortunes with other households, cleaving together without need of patrimonial ideological models to form polities around super-households such as that of the en of Ebla. The borders of EBA polities in Syria and northern Mesopotamia, then, judging from the royal archives of Ebla, are best defined socio-politically—not geographically—on the basis of both a patrimonial household ideology, and a more arbitrary ideology of contractual law. Ascertaining the structure and function of this system, at least in broad strokes, will surely be an ongoing topic of discussion with implications for the consideration of the role, if any, played by segmentary lineage systems in the historical trajectory of urbanization and collapse that characterized the EBA in Syria.

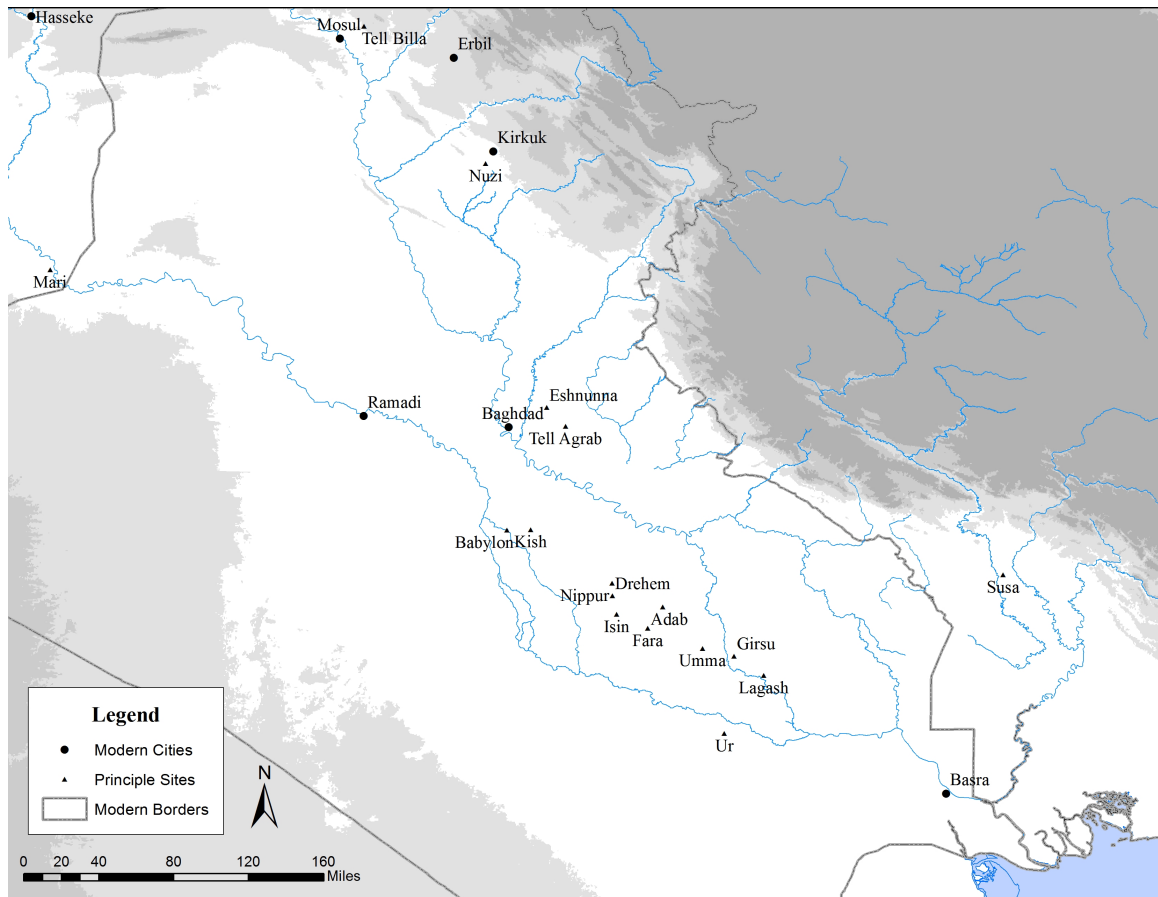


## **Chapter 8**

### **Segmentary Lineage Systems in Early and Middle Bronze Age**

#### **Texts from Southern Mesopotamia and Mari**

In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that no compelling evidence exists within the textual records of either ancient Nabada, Ebla, nor elsewhere to confirm the presence of mobile pastoral groups or segmentary lineage societies in Syria during the EBA. For various reasons, reviewed above, the presence of such groups might nonetheless be obscured in the textual records, or simply be omitted altogether. This chapter will widen the search for those features by reviewing texts from southern Mesopotamia that either originate during the EBA or in the early MBA, but which, nevertheless, purport to depict the sociopolitical situation in southern Mesopotamia and Syria during some portion of the EBA. In Chapter 6, though, it was demonstrated that material evidence exists to suggest the presence of such groups during the MBA, and by comparison not during the EBA. This raises the question of the nature of mobile pastoralism in MBA texts at Mari, and its sociopolitical character. Thus, the Old Babylonian (OB) archives at Mari, relevant primarily to the reigns of Yasmah-Addu, and Zimri-Lim, will also be briefly addressed. The following points will be established in this chapter. First, the term MAR.TU, as an ‘ethnic’ designation can be shown to be distinct from the Syrian toponyms Martu and Martum known from the Ebla texts. Thus, the appearance of this term in many instances as an individual or group determinative, or geographical designation in texts from southern Mesopotamia, has no necessary relationship to this area of Syria. Second, the term MAR.TU is clearly meant to indicate



**Figure 8.1. Sites with cuneiform finds referenced in Chapter 8**

individuals of a mobile pastoral origin or background, and implies a segmentary lineage system. In this way, it is used parallel to the later OB term *hana* at Mari. Third, other terms equated with MAR.TU, such as Tidnum and Amurru, are to be understood as specific groups of mobile pastoral populations, having distinct ethnic origins. Fourth, the term Amurru came to assume most of the meanings of the more generic term MAR.TU, and this fact has obfuscated the semantic distinction of these two terms in the EBA. Fifth, there is reason to suspect that a group known as Amurru, which had a significant impact on the onomastic landscape of the Ur III State, are correlated with urban decline and economic disintegration in the Syrian Jezireh in the latter few centuries of the EBA.

Sixth, while the range of sociopolitical characteristics of mobile pastoral groups attested in the OB archive at Mari is not entirely clear, there is evidence to suggest that the segmentary lineage model is nonetheless relevant to the geopolitical context of Mari. Certain characteristics of those societies can be explained by reference to an attenuation of such structures by interaction with sedentary, agricultural, state-based societies. Comparison with the EBA results then raises the question of when such groups arrived in Syria, what the character of their society was at that time, and how they interacted with sedentary power structures there to produce the situation that can be apprehended from the OB archives of Mari.

### **MAR.TU and Amorites in the Early Bronze Age**

The broadly held opinion that Amorites in the EBA—indicated in Sumerian texts from at least as early as the Ur III period at the end of the EBA by the writing MAR.TU—were mobile pastoralists who can be located in central or eastern Syria and the Jezireh, and the assumption they are to be associated with the Eblaite toponym Martu and the Jebel Bishri southeast of the Big Bend region of the Euphrates River Valley (e.g. Klein 1996: 83; Streck 2000: 26, 31; Jahn 2007: 194-95; Sallaberger 2007: 445) necessitates a discussion of the phenomenon here. What may be termed the ‘Amorite Problem’—the representation of these people in older histories as rampaging barbarians from the desert, later as leaders of royal dynastic houses in the alluvium of southern Mesopotamia, their particular origin and sociopolitical character, and their appearance throughout the Near East—has been a subject of study for more than a century (e.g. Clay 1909, 1919; Bauer 1926, 1929; more recently see Streck 2000; Sallaberger 2007; Jahn

2007; Michalowski 2011; Porter 2012). The older paradigm of the nature of the Amorites relied upon what has already been discussed in Chapter 2 as the ‘wave model’. As knowledge of cuneiform texts has expanded in the last century, so the relevant literature concerning this Amorite phenomenon has expanded to include documents stretching from Egypt and the Mediterranean coast through the furthest reaches of the Fertile Crescent to the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, and spanning a period of about one and a half thousand years (cf. Streck 2000: 30). This stretch of time can be divided up into three different periods based on the nature of the sources and the historical pictures they present. Streck has dubbed these divisions the “Altammurisch”, “Mittelammurisch,” and “Neuammurisch” periods (2000: 30). Although the entire phenomenon bears studying as a whole, it is far beyond the purpose of this work to mount such a monumental undertaking. It is the earliest period of the Amorite phenomenon, which corresponds roughly to the EBA, from the Early Dynastic IIIb, through Sargonic Period, to the end of the Ur III period, that most directly concerns this study.

### **(When) Does MAR.TU = *amurru*?**

The sign combination MAR.TU and the Semitic word *amurru* have a tangled relationship that, without etymological understanding, will confound any attempt at a deeper investigation of the segmentary lineage implication of both these terms in the EBA. The Sumerian word *mar-tu* is definitely attested to have the meaning of the cardinal direction ‘west,’ from at least the Early Dynastic IIIa (ED IIIa) period. It is also commonly interpreted in this and later periods to indicate an ethnicity or at least a group

of people also identified by the Semitic word *amurru*. That Semitic term is attested variously as a personal name, a deity, and a group designation, at times perhaps with an ethnic connotation. Although scholars tend to use the terms synonymously, the following discussion will demonstrate that the Sumerian term MAR.TU is actually a more general, sociological category, into which *amurru*, ‘Amorites’, may be categorized during the EBA.

MAR.TU, with uncertain reading, appears as early as the ED IIIa in two texts, TŠ 648<sup>352</sup> (Jestin 1937) and WF 78<sup>353</sup> (Deimel 1924) from Fara.<sup>354</sup> Wilcke has interpreted the term’s appearance in the latter text as a personal name (1969: 28). It is also possible, though, that it appears as either an ethnonym or an occupational designation. The appearance of the term in the former text is more probably as a group designation. That text concerns the distribution of bread for two sets of male workers and a set of women. The term follows this last entry and is the last line on the front of the tablet, seemingly labeling all the individuals in this text as MAR.TU. In the Sargonic period, MAR.TU appears in thirty-two texts known to me and recorded in the public database of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI<sup>355</sup>).<sup>356</sup> These texts are presented in Table 2, below. Six texts exhibit the meaning ‘west’. In eleven texts, the term appears in contexts where it can be interpreted variously either as a PN, an ethnonym, an occupation, or some combination of these. Six texts, however, seem to

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<sup>352</sup> CDLI no. P010876.

<sup>353</sup> CDLI no. P011035.

<sup>354</sup> Edzard et al. also cited RTC 70 from ED IIIb Girsu as another example (1977: 115). Bauer (1971: 319) has suggested that its appearance in this particular text is more likely to indicate a particular district as the location of a field, as in Nikolskü 1908, 42 and elsewhere.

<sup>355</sup> <http://cdli.ucla.edu>

<sup>356</sup> The CDLI also records the sign combination in the text TCBI I 184. The editors of that text, however, record the signs HAR.TU there (Pomponio et al. 2006: 191). This latter reading seems clear from the photograph they provide.

					Possible Meaning					
No.	Publication	Secondary	CDLI no.	Provenance	PN	PN element	Ethnic	Occupation	Cardinal direction	GN
1			P270829	Umma?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2			P271241	Umma?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	CUSAS 11, 174		P324813	Adab	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	CUSAS 13, 172		P323394	Umma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	CUSAS 19, 090		P329269	Adab	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	DPA 46		P213159	Girsu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Fs Sjöberg 014		P213245	near Lagash?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8	ITT 1 01406		P213820	Girsu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	ITT 1 01475		P213880	Girsu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	L'uomo 13	CUSAS 26 100	P214950	unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	MAD 1 268	RIME 2.1.5 iv 1	P217670	Tell Agrab?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12	MAD 5 005		P215333	Kish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	MAD 5 013		P215340	Kish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	MAD 5 018		P215345	Kish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	MAD 5 071		P215394	Umm al-Jir?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	MAD 5 099		P215421	Umm al-Jir?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	MCS 9 234	Cripps 2010 no. 29	P215505	Umma	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18	MCS 9 266	Cripps 2010 no. 4	P215537	Umma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	MDP 14 09		P215574	Susa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	MDP 14 18		P215582	Susa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	OAIC 25		P215897	Eshnunna	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	OAIC 26		P215898	Eshnunna	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	OIP 014 180	Yang p. 293	P216036	Adab	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
24	OIP 014 185	Yang p. 340-1	P216041	Adab	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
25	OSP 1, 024		P216091	Nippur	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	RTC 085	RIME 2.1.5 iv 1"	P216864	Girsu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
27	RTC 124	RIME 2.1.5 iv 1'	P216903	Girsu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
28	RTC 148	RA 004, 024	P128412	Girsu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	RTC 245		P217017	Girsu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	STTI 020	ITT 1, 01176	P217065	Girsu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	TLB 03, 002		P134144	Girsu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	SAK 170-171	OIP 104, 24	P213188	Girsu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Table 8.1. MAR.TU in Sargonic-period texts from Southern Mesopotamia<sup>357</sup>**

necessitate its interpretation as a PN. For instance, MAD 5 13 is an administrative text from Kish which takes the format of one or more lines of PNs followed by a line reading *ugula* PN, with the implication that individual workers are being assigned to specific overseers. In lines 5-6 on that tablet is found “1 dingir-gàr X / *ugula* MAR.TU” (Gelb 1970: 18). The same individual appears to be present also in MAD 5 5 (Gelb 1970: 5-6) and MAD 5 18 (Gelb 1970: 21-22). MAD 5 71 necessitates interpretation as an ethnonym or some other designation of group identity. This text records deliveries of

<sup>357</sup> Abbreviations are as follows: CUSAS 11 = Visicato and Westenholz 2010, CUSAS 13 = Maiocchi 2010, CUSAS 19 = Maiocchi and Visicato 2012, DPA 46 = Limet 1973, Fs Sjöberg = Foster 1989, ITT 1 = Thureau-Dangin 1910, L'uomo = Pettinato 1997, CUSAS 26 = Westenholz 2014, MAD 1 = Gelb 1952, RIME 2 = Frayne 1993, MAD 5 = Gelb 1970, MCS 9 = Donald 1964, MDP 14 = Scheil et al. 1913, OAIC = Gelb 1955, OIP 14 = Luckenbill 1930, OSP 1 = Westenholz 1975b, RTC = Thureau-Dangin 1903, RA 4 = Thureau-Dangin 1897, STTI = Donbaz and Foster 1982, TLB 3 = Hallo 1973, SAK = Thureau-Dangin 1907, and OIP 104 = Gelb et al. 1991.

grain from three different individuals, one of whom is identified as “e-la-dingir / MAR.TU” (Gelb 1970: 67-68). The other two are identified beyond their PNs as ‘dumu PN’ and as ‘PAP.PAP’ (aman?). Two more appear to indicate ethnicity or group identity possibly by reference to a toponym. For instance, in OIP 14 185, which records the distribution of beer, lines 2-3 identify one recipient as “su-bir<sub>x</sub>-a / u-ba-ru-um mar-[tu]”, or “Subira, the Martu-foreigner” (cf. Yang 1989: 340-41).<sup>358</sup> In two *pisan dub-ba* texts from Telloh (26 and 27), recording abbreviated year-names of Šar-kalli-šarri, the term must be interpreted as a toponym. These will be discussed further below. In the Ur III period, the term is attested to have all of these meanings, and is also attested as the writing for the name of the god Amurru, which most scholars have associated with both the ethnicon *amurru* and a steppe-like environment (e.g. Klein 1996: 83; Streck 2000: 70-71; Michalowski 2011: 105).

The Semitic word *amurru*, while not appearing in cuneiform texts in either the Pre-Sargonic or Sargonic periods, is rarely attested in Ur III documents. Similar sounding words occur in the Ebla corpus, mostly as PNs. The PN *a-mu-ra* appears over eighty times, mostly in ARET XV. In ARET XV 31 rev. X 12 it appears with the place determinative. *A-mu-ri* appears five times as a PN, and once with a place determinative. *A-mu-ru*<sub>12</sub> appears three times as a PN. It is somewhat more common in Old Assyrian texts as a deitic particle in personal names, where it alternates with the sign combination MAR.TU (Hirsch 1961: 5), and appears also as an apparent ethnicon and as a designation of silver. Michalowski argued that MAR.TU is a sumerogram for *amurru* in the Ur III

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<sup>358</sup> The name reappears in OIP 14 185, again qualified as MAR.TU (Yang 1989: 293). Gelb doubted the restoration of the signs BAPPIR and A there (1944: 27 n33), but in light of OIP 14 185, this restoration is likely. Another beer distribution text, OIP 14 79 (Yang 1989: 378) lists an individual as a foreigner, but does not supply his provenance.

period on the basis of a single Neo-Sumerian text, WMAH 33 (2011: 106). In fact, as will be shown below, in that situation the term is being used as a more specific designation than the general sociological term MAR.TU. Even if the terms alternate in Old Assyrian texts, the two terms cannot be understood to be simply synonymous in the south, even in the Ur III period. *Amurru* is most commonly attested after the Ur III period. The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD) lists the following attested meanings for *amurru*: “west... west wind... Perseus (lit.: west star),” and for *amurrû*: “Amorite (i.e. pertaining to the Amurru-people)” (A/2, 2004: 92-93).

The question of how *amurru* relates to MAR.TU has been particularly vexing to assyriologists. The current consensus is that there can be no phonological relationship between the words, their similarity being only superficial and, furthermore, that the reading MAR.TU, in the term’s ‘ethnic’ sense, is unclear (cf. Edzard 1990a: 433-34). Historically, many scholars have assumed that these two words were to be connected by their ‘western’ meaning and that this must be the etymological explanation for the Amorites—a people located (north)west of Southern Mesopotamia (see discussion in Halдар 1971: 6). Whiting has argued that the meaning ‘west’ for *amurru* instead derived only secondarily as a result of the western location of these people (1995: 1231). I argue that *amurru* only acquired this meaning later, as a result of the initial equivalence that these terms shared in an ethnic sense and the fact that there was no single word in Akkadian to express the concept ‘west’. In support of this is the fact that the phonetic spelling of the term is hardly attested with this meaning in the CAD, which instead justifies this translation from the MBA onward on the basis of Neo-Assyrian lexical lists. In fact, even from these later periods, CAD only cites two examples, both inscriptions of



Sennacherib<sup>359</sup>, where the phonetic spelling *a-mur-ri* and, once at Nuzi (Gadd 1926: 150, no. 34), *a-bu-ur-ri*, are used (cf. CAD A/2, 2004: 92-93). Instead, the writing IM.MAR.TU is far more commonly attested. Also relevant to this point is that Akkadian dialects seem to have had no simple way to refer to the cardinal directions east or west. One most often encounters a construction with *erebu*, such as *ereb Šamši*—(in the direction of) the setting of the sun. The appearance of this construction is roughly contemporary with the attested periods of the use of IM.MAR.TU in CAD, above, i.e. Neo-Assyrian and, once, in a Mari letter from the MBA (cf. CAD vol. E, 2004: 258-59). Cardinal directionality, otherwise, does not seem to have been indicated in Akkadian. This fact might initially seem strange, as terms for cardinal directions are common in Western (and Chinese) societies, but many societies do not make use of such terms. In fact, the contemporaneous appearance of IM.MAR.TU with *amurru* in Neo-Assyrian lexical lists, and the description of east and west relative to the movement of the sun, suggest that it was only in this late period that a desire to indicate these cardinal directions in spoken Akkadian developed.<sup>360</sup> The later equation of the terms MAR.TU and *amurru* might simply reflect a desire to indicate the cardinal direction ‘west’ in spoken and written Akkadian. Constructions such as *ereb Šamši* suggest that it was not the only solution found. It reflects, then, an evolution of the meaning of *amurru* to cover more fully the semantic range of MAR.TU on the basis of their earlier relationship, but without any specific pre-existing etymological relationship. In any event, it seems that

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<sup>359</sup> OIP 2 102 and 113 (Luckenbill 1924).

<sup>360</sup> See for example discussions in Mietzner and Pasch (2007), Heine (1997: 35-65) and Brown (1983). Brown’s study led Heine to surmise that “If in a given language a term for a cardinal direction is introduced, then the sun provides the most likely model to be selected” (1997: 50).

the term *amurru* acquired this directional meaning only after the OB period, and well after its earliest attestations in the EBA.

### **Segmentary Lineage Characteristics of Amurru in EBA Texts and Literary Traditions**

Early Dynastic and Sargonic-period texts from southern Mesopotamia do not seem to indicate any specific characteristics for individuals named or qualified as *amurru* or MAR.TU that can be attributed to characteristics of segmentary lineage systems. For three different reasons, though, this observation is not particularly strong evidence against the argument that either term had such connotations at that time. First, one might expect that MAR.TU mentioned in these texts are more likely to be engaged in sedentary economic structures and so to be sedentary themselves. Second, that use of *amurru* as a personal name does not seem to necessitate that an individual is an Amorite, *per se*, or is to be associated with an Amorite or MAR.TU way of life. Third, it is entirely possible that MAR.TU engaged in mobile pastoral ways of life are recorded, but not in ways that are identifiable or that set them apart as unique in the corpus of Sargonic administrative texts.<sup>361</sup> Nevertheless, the possibility of a mobile pastoral and segmentary lineage nature for the term MAR.TU is suggested in some securely dated EBA documents from the Ur III period. The first two of these relate to royal propaganda. On the first of these, *Šū-Sîn Collection B*<sup>362</sup>, a Sammeltafel from Nippur containing a compilation of inscriptions relating to that king, the term MAR.TU appears twice. Its first instance provides no

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<sup>361</sup> Nevertheless, a recent review of sheep and wool in the Ur III economy detects no trace of them in those texts (Sallaberger 2014).

<sup>362</sup> See Frayne 1997: 295, 299.

ethnographic information, but the second, in a somewhat broken context, preserves the following description:

mar-tu lú-ḫa-lam-m[a] / dí-ma-ur-ra-gin <sub>7</sub> / ur-bar-ra-gin <sub>7</sub> [break...]	MAR.TU, evil men, thinking like dogs, like wolves...
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*Šū-Sîn Collection B V, 25-27*

This break is particularly vexing as the familiar formula from Neo-Sumerian literary texts following MAR.TU—lú... nu-zu—is likely to have comprised the line after next, and other potentially relevant information is probably lost in the break. Nevertheless, some information does appear elsewhere. In the seventeenth year name of Ibbi-Sîn they are described as:

mar-tu á-IM.ùlu ul-ta uru <sup>ki</sup> nu-zu	The MAR.TU at the southern border(?), whom from distant times have not known cities...
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UET 3, n. 698, etc. (Legrain 1947)

The Neo-Sumerian literary tradition surrounding MAR.TU is far more explicit and establishes the mobile pastoral nature of this group with a high degree of probability (cf. Jahn 2007). The only uncertainty is to what degree this depiction relates to an EBA reality. Relevant literary compositions are given in Table 3, below. Descriptions of MAR.TU from these texts imply mobile pastoralism, as in the following lines:

iri nu-tuku é nu-tuku-ra / <sup>d</sup> en-ki-ke <sub>4</sub> mar-tu máš-anše sag-e-eš mu-ni-rig <sub>7</sub>	For those who have no cities, have no houses, Enki bestowed livestock on the MAR.TU.
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*Enki and the World Order, 248-249*

and

ETCSL no.	CDLI no.	Provenance(s)	Name	mobility	pastoralism	no agriculture	GN	language
1.1.3	P259249	Nippur	Enki and the World Order	✓	✓	☐	☐	☐
1.7.1	P269077	Nippur	Marriage of Martu	✓	✓	☐	☐	☐
1.8.2.2	P469673	Nippur, Ur, Kish	Lugalbanda and the Anzud-bird	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐
1.8.2.3	P469674	Nippur, Ur, Babylon	Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta	☐	☐	☐	✓	☐
2.1.5	P469679	Nippur, Ur, Isin, Susa	Cursing of Agade	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐
2.4.2.02	P469698	Nippur, Ur	Šulgi B	☐	☐	☐	☐	✓
2.4.2.03	P469699	Nippur	Šulgi C	☐	☐	☐	☐	✓
2.5.4.01	P255529, etc.	Nippur, Ur	Išme-Dagan A+V	✓	✓	☐	☐	☐
4.12.1	P345300	Nippur	Martu A	☐	☐	☐	✓	☐
4.12.2	P255456	Nippur	Martu B	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.9.1	P283759 etc.	Nippur, Ur	Home of Fish	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.1.03	P231593	Nippur, Susa	Proverbs Collection 3	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐
6.1.07	P231619	Nippur	Proverbs Collection 7	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐

**Table 8.2. Attestations of MAR.TU in Neo-Sumerian Literary Compositions**

mar-tu é nu-zu iri<sup>ki</sup> nu-zu / lú lál-  
lá ħur-sag-gá tuš-a / <sup>udu</sup>a-lum u<sub>8</sub>-ù  
si ħa-ma-da-ab-sá-sá

The MAR.TU, not knowing houses, not  
knowing cities, nomads<sup>363</sup> who live in  
the steppe, bring me lines of *alum* ewes.

*Išme-Dagan A+V, 266-268*

At the very least, their ignorance of agriculture is attested, as in the following lines:

ki-en-gi ki-uri nígin-na-a-ba / mar-tu  
lú še nu-zu ħu-mu-zìg

At the border of Sumer and Akkad, the  
MAR.TU, men who do not know barley,  
arose.

*Lugalbanda and the Anzud-bird, 303-304*

and

gig gú-nida lál-gin<sub>7</sub> íb-ak / mar-tu i-  
gu<sub>7</sub>-a níg šag<sub>4</sub>-bi nu-un-zu

Wheat and hulled barley were sweetened.  
The MAR.TU ate it, not knowing what it  
was.

*Proverbs Collection 3.140 and 7.95*

The Marriage of Martu contains all of these elements, and its exceptional nature will be  
addressed more fully, below. Other texts in the list indicate MAR.TU as a specific place

<sup>363</sup> This translation for lú lál-lá, where ‘phantom’ might be more conventional, is suggested here by the appearance of the gloss in lú-áslag B lines 188-189 (MSL 12, 175 B r iii 25-26; cf. Edzard 2003: 180). There it appears just following entries for lú zāh, discussed above in the sa-gáz section. It is glossed as *a-wi-il zi-qí-qí-im* and as *su-tu-um* and immediately precedes lú mar-tu = *a-mu-ur-ru-um*. It is unlikely that lú zāh should be simply equated with mar-tu on this basis, given the explicit nature of its translations, though the activity indicated might be somehow associated with mobile pastoralists. It is unclear, however, what effect this placement should have on the interpretation of *a-wi-il zi-qí-qí-im*, literally ‘man of the wind’. It seems likely to indicate either robbery or banditry, mobility, or both. Either interpretation could be supported by the literal translation. The context here, though, implies no negative connotation.

or language. All of these compositions are known only from OB copies, though they likely reflect a tradition of the Amorites stemming from EBA sources. The one exception to this is the Cursing of Agade, the initial composition of which must be dated at the latest to approximately 2000 BC on the basis of three exemplars examined by Cooper (1983: 11). In that text, the MAR.TU are described as

mar-tu kur-ra lú še nu-zu / gud du <sub>7</sub> máš du <sub>7</sub> -da mu-un-na-da-an-ku <sub>4</sub> -ku <sub>4</sub>	The MAR.TU of the steppe, men ignorant of barley, brought in for her suitable cattle <sup>364</sup> and suitable goats.
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*Cursing of Agade, 46-47*

Another corpus<sup>365</sup> of texts with possible relevance to the topic of mobile pastoral communities in the Ur III period are the twenty-four texts of the *Royal Correspondence of the Kings of Ur*. These documents are all known only from OB scholastic copies but take the form of letters written between various kings of Ur and their agents and ministers. The historicity of these texts has been the subject of much controversy lately (Huber 2001; Hallo 2006; Michalowski 2011; Attinger 2012). A detailed review of the possible historical significance of these letters is beyond the purview of this work and, besides, is more than adequately presented by Michalowski in his recent edition of these texts (2011). Although there is no reason to assume that the events reflected in most of the letters bear a direct relationship to any historical events, they are not totally divorced from an EBA reality, and some are possibly based on an historical kernel (Michalowski

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<sup>364</sup> Michalowski has argued that the attribution of cattle to MAR.TU here is evidence against a mobile lifestyle: “Goats certainly are raised by mobile folk, but cattle typically are not” (2011: 91). In fact, mobile cattle pastoralists are well-attested ethnographically, particularly in east Africa, but throughout the Sahel region. For one example, refer to the accounts of the Nuer in Chapters 2 and 3. Michalowski seems to be influenced in his opinion by Khazanov’s focus on ‘true’ nomadism, i.e. full mobility which, as is argued in this dissertation, is anathema to segmentary lineage systems and results from a presentist bias applied to the ethnographic record. Cattle are often raised by ‘mobile folk’ and present no particular barrier to mobility, even in relatively dry climates.

<sup>365</sup> Michalowski (2011: 216) has rightly pointed out that the treatment of these texts as a unified corpus is the product of a modern scholarly tradition, and does not reflect any ancient reality.

2011: 218). Furthermore, they reflect Old Babylonian attitudes to the Ur III period that themselves have an historical basis, albeit also a bias (or biases), shaped to an unknown extent and degree by the cultural and political context of that period. That being said, there are seven texts<sup>366</sup> which especially relate information relevant to possible mobile pastoral groups characterized by segmentary lineage systems in these letters, and therefore possibly to the Ur III period. They largely reinforce the impression of MAR.TU present in other Neo-Sumerian literature. Leaving aside historical considerations, *CKU* text 3 seems to portray formerly mobile pastoral populations engaged in sedentarization and irrigation agriculture in the steppe on the frontier of Sumer. *CKU* 21 seems to indicate that the interests of hostile MAR.TU infiltrating the borders of the Ur III state were centered on raiding grain stores. *CKU* 18 mentions skirmishes against hostile MAR.TU near the mountain of Ebiḫ, west of the Tigris, near modern Mosul. Meanwhile, other texts indicate the presence of MAR.TU to the east and northeast, for instance in *CKU* 24, where they are cited as potential allies against Elam. That text also demonstrates that the term is a synonym for an apparently more specific group, Tidnum.<sup>367</sup> Given the potentially apocryphal nature of these representations, it is difficult to draw conclusions from this ‘corpus’ relating to the nature of MAR.TU. Nevertheless, these texts are still relevant to the question at hand and their significance can be tempered through their inclusion with the wider corpus of literature being assembled in this chapter.

An interesting observation with ethnographic implications relating to *amurru* in Sumerian literature was offered by Jerrold Cooper. He identified a degree of racism in

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<sup>366</sup> These are (*CKU*) nos. 3, 9, 15, 18, 21, 22, and 24 as they appear edited in Michalowski 2011. These correspond to ETCSL numbers 3.1.11+3.1.3, 3.1.6, 3.1.13.2, 3.1.15, 3.1.17, 3.1.18 and 3.1.20, respectively.

<sup>367</sup> See discussion of the Eblaite polity DADAnu, in Chapter 7.

Mesopotamian sources directed at both Amorites and Gutians, exceptional for the fact that “Mesopotamian sources of all periods are surprisingly free of racist ideology” (1983: 30). Cooper identified the characteristics of these two groups most commonly cited in this derision as being of animal intellect, instinct, or appearance, religious ignorance, and having dietary differences including an ignorance of proper cooking techniques and agricultural produce (1983: 31-33). Differences between southern Mesopotamian populations and other neighboring societies, and even differences between neighboring societies and city-states within the Mesopotamian cultural tradition, do not seem to have ever inspired this sort of ‘ethnic’ animosity, at least not to the frequent degree that it is leveled upon Amorites and Gutians. Although there were likely extreme dietary differences if these societies were indeed ignorant of agricultural production, it is unlikely that they showed a specifically harsh hostility towards Mesopotamians, or that they were stupid or did, indeed, look like monkeys. Take, for instance, Elamites who can also be identified as a group outside the traditional sphere of Mesopotamian society and frequently hostile to it, but who do not bear comparable treatment in historical or literary accounts. What, then, can account for the ‘racist’ literary and historical topos of the Amorites?

In this case, I suggest that the source of this ‘racist’ hostility sensed by Cooper is not actually underlying physical or religious differences—though these must have certainly existed to some extent—or by any special animosity, barbarity, or stupidity possessed by Amorites or Gutians, but was rather inspired by a profound sociopolitical difference between the hierarchical, sedentary southern society and the unique nature of segmentary lineage systems. In this way one could think of a sort of structural friction

between two such societies, in a modified sense of the Giddensian friction of historical change discussed in Chapter 3. This friction did not involve different interests, or at least not only that, but completely different sociological foundations, different structures and institutions, which served to confound the ability of two such groups to interpret and anticipate the actions of one another. This sort of difference could, and I argue did in this case, build a special sense of ‘otherness’ and suspicion that could breed this sort of hostility, called ethnic by Cooper, which was not applied to other foreign populations with a similar (and familiar) sociopolitical structure.

In this light, the mythic composition *The Marriage of Martu* is particularly interesting. In it, a princess, Adgar-kidug, from the city of Inab, a sort of idealized sedentary, hierarchical society, is considering marriage to Martu. Her girlfriend, cites many of the usual criticisms of MAR.TU society in an attempt to dissuade this union:

Lo, their hands are destructive, (their) features are (those) [of monkeys],  
*They are* those who eat the taboo [of] Nanna, [*they* have] no reverence,  
 In their constantly roaming around, .....,  
 [*Being*] the abomination [of] the temples of the gods,  
 Their [counsel] is confused, [they cause] only dis[turbance],  
 A *man* who is clothed in leather-sac, who .....,  
 A tent-dweller [*buffeted*] by wind and rain, [who offers no] prayer,  
 He who dwells in the mountains, [knows not] the places [*of the gods*],  
 A man who digs up mushrooms at the foot of the mountain, who knows no  
 submission,  
 He eats uncooked meat,  
 In his lifetime has no house,  
 When he dies, he will not be buried;  
 My girlfriend - why would you marry Martu?!

Klein 1996: 89

Despite her girlfriends incredulousness, the final lines of the composition record Adgar-kidug seeming to joyfully embrace these MAR.TU attributes as she replies: “I will marry MAR.TU!”. The composition has been interpreted variously (see Klein 1996: 90).



Vanstiphout has argued that that it should be understood as representing a positive attitude toward the union of a sedentary and mobile pastoral society (1999).<sup>368</sup> I would argue that the significant thing about this composition is a kind of defiant embrace, not of the ‘barbarian’ MAR.TU, and some sort of social or economic integration of that society into the sedentary south, but rather an embrace of the ‘barbarian’ *qualities* of that society for their own sake. For a similar sentiment, one need look no further than the treatment of mobile pastoral ‘Bedouin’ societies offered by ibn Khaldûn<sup>369</sup> who, despite himself being a part of the sedentary world, nonetheless praised this society and found in its members necessary and virtuous qualities. For instance, Rosenthal translated from the *Muqaddimah*, “Bedouins are closer to being good than sedentary people... Bedouins are more disposed to courage than sedentary people... greater fortitude is found among the savage Arab Bedouins than among people who are subject to laws...” (1958: 253-59; see also 247-310). This somewhat contradictory sentiment made perfect sense in ibn Khaldûn’s lifetime, a period when ruling dynasties claimed heritage from such groups.<sup>370</sup> Unless there were some truth behind this representation of MAR.TU, above, why would it otherwise be professed and embraced in southern Mesopotamia during the Old Babylonian period?

Despite the fact that most of the compositions of Neo-Sumerian texts in Table 3 cannot be dated earlier than the Old Babylonian period, they no doubt reflect an historical

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<sup>368</sup> For a similar sentiment see Porter 2012: 293-295, who argues that this passage of the text is too often taken out of context and, “The basic representation of the character of Mardu and his situation in life is neither hostile or negative”. The essential point, I argue, is not the story’s representation of Mardu here, but rather Adgar-kidug’s conception of him. In the disparity between these two representations is precisely the *sitz im leben* of the story.

<sup>369</sup> For Porter’s dismissal of ibn Khaldûn’s understanding of his geopolitical and cultural context *vis a vis* these mobile societies see 2012: 11.

<sup>370</sup> This implies a relatively late date for the composition of the myth, perhaps during the Isin-Larsa period at the earliest, but more likely in the OB period.

memory which, though perhaps shaped and influenced by contemporary political and cultural forces and biases, agrees with the more sparse historical and literary compositions that can be more securely placed in the Ur III period. The specific criticisms of MAR.TU offered in these texts accord well enough with the features of mobile pastoralism and concomitant segmentary lineage systems that this cannot have been coincidence—such societies were known to city-dwelling Mesopotamians at least in the OB period, and very likely also during the EBA. Epistolary texts purporting to relate to the reign of Ur III kings that made up part of the OB scribal curriculum seem to reflect some of these same traditions. This tradition represents the MAR.TU as a mobile, pastoral, non-agricultural society that differed from sedentary southern Mesopotamia, and its sedentary neighbors, in a fundamental way. Connections between the god Amurru and a steppe-like environment, given his apparent connection with this ‘ethnicon’ (see Edzard 1997; Streck 2000: 70-71, etc.), make this all the more likely.

### **The location of EBA Amorites**

The next point to be made is that the common assumption that the Eblaite toponym Martu is identical with the Sumerogram MAR.TU (e.g. Streck 2000, etc.) is simply untenable. The assumption seems to be based on three pieces of evidence. First there is the appeal of much later, OB documentation for mobile pastoral populations at Mari. It seems natural to connect these populations to a preceding group of MAR.TU generally present throughout Syria in the EBA. Second, the Eblaite toponym MAR.TU appears in Sargonic and Ur III period royal inscriptions and year names where it is often assumed to be identical with the ‘ethnic’ use discussed above. Third, this connection is

thought to be strengthened by inscriptions that mention MAR.TU with another term, interpreted to be Tidnum, a group attested in connection with MAR.TU in its sociological use in documents from southern Mesopotamia—a group thought to be represented in the Ebla texts by the spelling DADAnu (see discussion in Chapter 7). A closer investigation shows that these assumed equivalencies are unwarranted. No evidence serves to connect the Syrian toponym Martu, known from pre-Sargonic texts from Ebla, and Sargonic and Ur III texts from southern Mesopotamia, with the wider ‘Amorite’ phenomenon.

In the Sargonic period, the toponym appears in association with Naram-Sin and Šar-kalli-šarri (Sommerfeld 2000). In the *‘Great Revolt’ of Naram-Sin*, for instance, context places it securely in Syria.<sup>371</sup> First, Naram-Sin comes to it only after having crossed the Tigris and Euphrates in pursuit of the southern rebels. Second, the site of the final battle is recorded as *ba-šar ŠA.DU-ì mar-tu*, or ‘Bašar, in the region of Martu’. Common consensus is that *ba-šar* is to be identified as the Jebel Bishri (see Sommerfeld 2000: 428).<sup>372</sup> While this inscription does not record hostility against the toponym (Sommerfeld 2000: 431), but rather records a battle that took place in its vicinity<sup>373</sup>, a year name of Šar-kalli-šarri, recorded in three versions seems to do so.<sup>374</sup> The first of these texts (no. 26 in Table 7.1) reads: *[i]n 1 MU šar-kà-lí-šàr-rí MAR.TU-am in ba-ša-ar KUR [i]š<sub>11</sub>-a-ru*. This inscription seems to indicate that Martu was defeated at Jebel Bishri, suggesting the Syrian toponym known from Ebla. Text no. 27 in Table 7.2 is

<sup>371</sup> This account is recorded in RIME as three different composite texts, 2.1.4.2, 2.1.4.3, and 2.1.4.6 (Sommerfeld 2000).

<sup>372</sup> Sommerfeld cautioned against using data from both the Ebla texts and this composition to try to locate the land of MAR.TU on the basis that some chronological discrepancies might exist (2000: 429). Nevertheless, it is clear that the same toponym is indicated here.

<sup>373</sup> Sommerfeld understands MAR.TU here as a large region containing the Jebel Bishri (2000: 429). Although this is a possibility, I prefer to understand Jebel Bishri as being in the vicinity of MAR.TU, owing to the description of Uršu as being ‘in the country of Ebla’ in Gudea cylinder B, discussed below.

<sup>374</sup> RIME 2.1.5 (Frayne 1993: 183).

silent on the location of Martu, but seems to support the reading of *amurram*, here: [*in*] 1 MU *šar-kà-li-šàr-rí* MAR.TU-*am*. Both of these inscriptions are attested on pisan dub-ba texts from Girsu. A third text (no. 7 in Table 7.1), however, apparently from the Diyala, bears the following inscription: *in* 1 MU *šar-kà-<li>-šàr-<ri>* REC169<sup>375</sup> MAR.TU *iš-a-ru*, omitting both the *-am* and any topographic data. There can be no doubt that these are three attestations of a single year, and that the Martu referenced is to be located in Syria, on the basis of the appearance of *ba-ša-ar*. The *-am* following Martu in the first two examples from Girsu is usually understood to correspond to *amurr-am*. As Sommerfeld pointed out, though, it is also possible to interpret it: “als Singular ‘der MAR.TU(-Mann)’—es wäre dann der Anführer der Feinde gemeint, so die etwa Iphur-Kiš *Kiš<sup>ki</sup>-ši-am* ‘Kischite’ oder Amar-Girid UNUG<sup>ki</sup>-*am* ‘Urukäer’ genannt werden...” (2000: 436). It is also possible that due to the abbreviated nature of these tags, the appearance of *-am* here could be an error, or an idiosyncrasy of a single scribe, for the sign combination REC169 with the sign combination KASKAL.KUR, of a form that could be confused with AM.<sup>376</sup> In either event, these two nearly identical pisan dub-ba texts from Girsu are an inadequate foundation to justify the reading *amurru* for the writing of the toponym MAR.TU in Syrian contexts throughout the EBA, let alone the equation of that toponym with the more widely attested ethnonym.

After the Sargonic period, an inscription of Gudea records the toponym Martu, again in the context of Syria. This text, and the relationship between Martu and Tidnum are discussed in the previous chapter. There it was argued that this writing is more likely

<sup>375</sup> Sometimes transliterated *dun4*, but perhaps more accurately KASKAL.DUN4 meaning, in the Old Akkadian period, ‘battle’.

<sup>376</sup> This sign combination happens to be attested in its earliest occurrence at Girsu in the text ITT V 6767, dating to the Lagaš II period. One must keep in mind as well that, to the best of my knowledge, the pisan dub-ba texts under discussion here have not been collated for over a century.

to make reference to the Eblaite toponym DADAnu, as all other mentions of Tid(a)nu(m) associate them with areas to the east of the Tigris. If a mobile pastoral group was meant, as Marchesi argued, reference must have been to a particular territory associated with them, as in this context it served as a source of quarried alabaster (or perhaps calcite). Another possibility is that, already at this time, the term MAR.TU was being used, as in the Ur III period, as a general term to refer to territory that was not incorporated into the sphere of influence of a sedentary state, being instead pasture lands occupied primarily by mobile pastoral populations. In this way, then, the term need not imply any particular proximity. It may also be the case that the Syrian toponym was meant in the first instance, and in its more general sense in the second. Many have argued for a western location for this toponymic use of MAR.TU, relating to the Syrian toponym attested in the Ebla texts. In Ur III records, though, Michalowski has argued against a western location for KUR MAR.TU, noting that at Drehem, texts listing booty originating in KUR MAR.TU corresponds with periods in time when campaigns were being carried out “against locations to the east, northeast, and northwest, but not to the west of Sumer” (2011: 104). Furthermore, he noted that “the military officers who deliver this booty... are the same as those are doing much of the fighting in the [Zagros] highlands...” (2011: 104). The complicating factor is that the term may have been used, at this time, in a more general sociological sense, as will be discussed below. At this time, then, its use may not have been in reference to a discrete *place*, but rather to a *type* of territory. As Michalowski himself observed, “It is also possible that the hostile Amorites were not permanently associated with any specific geographical location and that the term ‘Amorite land’ was a shifting component in Mesopotamian mental maps” (2011: 104). I

would argue, instead, that the term referred to any territory outside the purview of a specific sedentary state, in this case regions dominated by mobile pastoral populations.

Recently, Sallaberger has made a convincing argument that some part of MAR.TU land is to be located west of the Tigris, at least as far as the Jebel Sinjar and perhaps into the Syrian Jezireh (2007: 449). He based this argument on the following facts. First, lists of booty recorded in the Drehem texts seem to mark out those goods from the MAR.TU land as unique from other states along and east of the Tigris, suggesting that the term does not apply to any one or any combination of those states (2007: 448). Second, booty taken from the MAR.TU land most often includes donkeys and fat-tailed sheep, the former only appear as booty one other time in the texts and the latter are unique to the MAR.TU land (2007: 448). Third is the case of Yamadium, which Sallaberger placed in the Jezireh between the Balikh and Khabur. This country appears in Ur III texts as a place with which the royal court maintained diplomatic relations. It is the only state whose members are referred to as MAR.TU. This entire phenomenon, as was discussed in Chapter 6, also corresponds to a period of general urban disintegration in Syria, a sort of ‘hollowing out’ of the landscape, detectable in the Ur III texts which, by the end of the empire, document only a ring of primary centers surrounding a landscape without references to any sedentary centers of political interest (2007: 446). Sallaberger argued that this correlation of the ‘hollowing’ of Syria with the increase in Amorite influence and presence in southern Mesopotamia at the end of the EBA is the result of a ‘vacuum’ at the end of the EBA (2007: 446).

Strong support that the plains of the Syrian Jezireh also correlate with the general designation of MAR.TU land is found in an economic text dating to the reign of Amar-

Sîn, Wabash 1. This text records the reception of ox, sheep, and goats by a man named Naplanum, designated as MAR.TU, for travel by boat to KUR MAR.TU. Alone this would garner no special interest, however three other individuals qualified by Syrian toponyms accompany this entry: Ebla, Uršu, and Mari. As Young says, “Wabash 1 adds additional Ur III evidence for the location of KUR MAR.TU in Syria” (1992: 176), however, as is argued here, there is more than one distinct use of this term at the time. A Syrian MAR.TU is indeed confirmed by this text, but there is no clear association with the ethnonym. Naplanum’s attribution as a MAR.TU here might refer either to his ethnic identity, occupation, status, or indeed his association with the Syrian toponym. More likely, the term here makes reference to the use of KUR MAR.TU not as a particular geographic location, but as a category of foreign land—mobile pastoral territory. This possibility will be discussed below. MAR.TU also appears along with implicit topographical information as a part of *Šu-Sîn Collection B* on the fragment Ni 4394, corresponding with column 3, lines 36-45 (Wilcke 1990: 25-26)<sup>377</sup>, where it preserves the first few signs of these lines, immediately following an account of an episode of rebellion against the king and his daughter by “[Simānu]m, [Ḥabūr]a, (and) [the surrounding district]s” (Frayne 1997: 297). The appearance of these two toponyms, if related, would imply an eastern location.

### **An Etymology for MAR.TU**

This still leaves unanswered the question of why MAR.TU was written when *amurru* was meant, at least in the ‘ethnic’ uses of the term, instead of a phonetic spelling. It is interesting to me that no assyriologist has yet proposed a rather obvious etymological

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<sup>377</sup> Civil’s edition of this text placed this fragment across columns V and VI of UM 29-15-566+ (1967).

possibility: ‘wagon-born’, in reference to a mobile nature of Amorite society. Whether such an etymology is possible or not, I follow Sallaberger (2007: 445, and cf. Verderame 2009) in arguing that the term MAR.TU, beyond its ethnic sense, had a use and significance as a sociological term. But whereas Sallaberger attributed to it the meaning ‘nomad’, and focused primarily on an ethnic difference arising primarily from “their social and economic independence of the urban institutions and organizations” (2011: 108), I would argue that these differences are structural, in the Giddensian sense. The term, and the ethnic difference that it communicated, is specifically a segmentary lineage system following from mobile pastoralism, and its associated culturally correlating features, as established in Chapter 3. This fact would explain the curiously wide application of the term MAR.TU to differently named groups such as Tidnum and Imatium in Šu-Sîn B (see Marchesi 2006: 11-12):

<p>mar-tu l[ú kúr-r]a / ti-id-n[u-um<sup>k</sup>]<sup>i</sup> / ià-a-  ma-d[i-um<sup>k</sup>]<sup>i</sup> / im-ma-da-[è-eš] / lu gal-  b[é] / mè šen-š[en-ba gaba] / im-m[a-  d]a-r[e]-eš / [á<sup>d</sup>en]-líl /  [<sup>d</sup>nin-l]íl-ta / [mè šen-šen]-ba / [à ga-  kár bí-si-si]</p>	<p>Hostile MAR.TU—Tidnum,  Yamatiyum—came out. Their kings  confronted him in battle. By the strength  of Enlil (and) Ninlil, in battle he defeated  (them).</p>
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Šu-Sin B, 38-48

It would also explain the application of the term MAR.TU to variously attested individual groups in later lexical texts.

At the same time, this conclusion casts uncertainty on the location of the KUR MAR.TU. Despite some clear associations with the east at this time, it is still unclear how far west a zone called KUR MAR.TU could have extended. Its use as a toponym in reference to Syria, however, throughout the EBA documentary corpus suggests a specific toponym, unrelated to the ‘ethnic’ uses of the term, especially as they are applied to



eastern and northeastern populations. Although I reject the association of MAR.TU/*amurru* with the polity attested in the Ebla corpus, this does not rule out that a group or groups perhaps called *amurru*, perhaps not, originally inspired the term MAR.TU. In conclusion then, MAR.TU/*amurru* seems to indicate a ‘tribal’ polity (cf. Sallaberger 2007: 445)—i.e. groups and individuals characterized by mobile pastoralism with a concomitant segmentary lineage system—in general in EBA texts from southern Mesopotamia, but there is not sufficient evidence to support the oft-held position that members of this group are to be located predominantly in Syria at this time. It is more likely that two discrete uses of the term obtain in the EBA documents from southern Mesopotamia.

### **Mobile Pastoralism and Segmentary Lineage Systems in the OB Archive of Mari**

Evidence for the presence of mobile pastoral groups with significant sociopolitical differences from the sedentary populations of southern Mesopotamia from the end of the third and beginning of the second millennium are complemented by the appearance of mobile pastoral groups in OB texts from Tell Hariri—ancient Mari, on the Syrian Euphrates near the Iraqi frontier. While a detailed review of this period and its archive is, strictly speaking, beyond the initial limits set for this study and would add significantly to its length, comparison with the EBA results inferred from this study thus far is, nevertheless, instructive for contextualizing both these specific results and the usefulness of the segmentary lineage model that has been developed in this dissertation. The following brief overview is meant 1) to highlight that the time between at least the end of the EBA and the beginning of the reign of Yarim-Lim at Mari witnessed a significant

transformation of Syrian society and 2) to illustrate the heuristic usefulness of the model of segmentary lineage systems developed in this dissertation in pursuing the nature of that transformation.

The so-called ‘archives’<sup>378</sup> of Mari, comprise some approximately 17,000 texts and text fragments and date primarily to reigns of Yasmah-Addu and Zimri-Lim (Sasson 2015: 3-4). The period spanned by the OB Mari archive covers nearly a half century, from approximately 1760 BC, to the time of Mari’s defeat at the hands of Hammurabi in 1711 BC, according to the reduced Middle Chronology (Sallaberger and Schrakamp *apud* Sallaberger 2011: 312). The Mari corpus provides a detailed window on the sociopolitical landscape of most of Southwest Asia at that time, as far abreast as the state of Yamhad, in northwestern Syria, to Elam in southwestern Iran.<sup>379</sup> The tablets in the Mari corpus span many different genres, including religious and ritual texts, literature, scribal memoranda, and a few legal texts, but are comprised primarily of letters and administrative texts relating to the internal functioning of the kingdom of Mari and its relationships with various aspects of its own population and outside polities (Sasson 2015: 3-4).<sup>380</sup>

It is uncontroversial that the OB Mari archives recorded significant populations dedicated to a mobile pastoral lifestyle. *Ḫanum* is a word encountered in the archives

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<sup>378</sup> On the use of this term in this context, see Sasson 1972.

<sup>379</sup> Thus, although there are a few documents to be found dated between the period of the EBA Ebla corpus, and the OB archives of Mari, notably a few texts dating to the *šakkanakku* period at Mari that were discussed in the previous chapter, there is a kind of ‘dark age’ for Syria and the western Jezireh that lasts approximately six centuries, from the destruction of Ebla, ca. 2350 BC, to the reign of Yahdun-Lim at Mari, beginning approximately 1760 BC, according to the reduced Middle Chronology.

<sup>380</sup> Although the overwhelming majority of these texts are written in the Akkadian language, it is known from the that another Semitic dialect, called Amorite, constituted a significant part of the substrate of spoken language in the area at this time (Ziegler and Charpin 2007).

which often bears a generic meaning for a mobile pastoralist (Fleming 2004b: 202).<sup>381</sup> It even seems to have been used synonymously with *amurru* in some texts indicate a difference between those populations—ostensibly mobile pastoral—and the sedentary, Akkadian (*akkadum*) population (Miglio 2014: 196-197). This same opposition is reflected in the titulary of Zimri-Lim when he is called, for example, the ‘king of Mari... and the land of the Ḫana’ (Frayne 1990: 625).<sup>382</sup> Far from being passive subjects to the rule of the kings of Mari, the *Ḫana* were divided into numerous groups, themselves subdivided, ostensibly on grounds of descent, and played differing and complicated roles in the construction, maintenance, and projection of political power from Mari. One of these groups, the Simalites, counted Zimri-Lim among their leaders. Throughout his reign, the Mariote state can be understood as being comprised of the sedentary populations of the valley surrounding Mari, as well as the mobile pastoral members of the Simalites. Other groups, at various times allied, opposed, or subjugated to the king of Mari in some way, were Yamina, Yamutbal, and Numkha, among others.

Despite the size and thoroughness of the Mari archives in documenting the sociopolitical situation of the reigns of especially Yasmah-Addu and Zimri-Lim, there is no overt indication of any ‘pure’ segmentary lineage system in operation among the mobile pastoral populations with which the Mariote administration had ongoing contact. This need not mean, however, that such systems were not present or had no relevance for the period. That ‘tribe’ of which the most is known, the Simalites, are bound to be something of an outlier because their power structure was unified with that of the sedentary capital of Mari in the person of Zimri-Lim. It is not surprising then, in light of

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<sup>381</sup> Durand has compared it to the West-Semitic root  $\sqrt{h}n$ , with the meaning ‘to pitch a tent, to encamp’ (*apud* Miglio 2014: 71).

<sup>382</sup> RIME 4 E4.6.12.3: LUGAL *ma-ri*<sup>KI</sup> [*tu-ut-tu-uk*<sup>KI</sup>] *ù ma-a-at* [*ḫa-na*<sup>KI</sup>].

the discussion of the importance of the maintenance of egalitarian economic systems in segmentary lineage societies, that there is good evidence for developed political hierarchy among Simalites. Nevertheless, aspects of segmentary lineage systems are still indicated. One instructive example of this is the office of the *merḥum*. Sasson described holders of the title *merḥum* as “leaders of tribal troops” and proposed an etymology that follows from  $\sqrt{r}h$ , meaning ‘to pasture’ (2015: 137). Durand pointed out that their post was subject to popular consensus from the members of their tribe (2004: 178). Nevertheless, that they benefited from the ownership of private property is clear in some texts, including ARM 2 28 (Kupper 1998)<sup>383</sup>, which mentions a 50 acre agricultural plot owned by the *merḥum* Ibal-pi-El.

Thus, any segmentary lineage character to the Simalites is likely to have been attenuated by this association with the sedentary center of Mari. The same is likely to have been the case with other groups known to be associated with the control of sedentary power centers. The degree to which this characterizes all of the Simalites, or indeed all mobile pastoral groups at this time in Syria and the Jezireh, though, is unknown and, likely unknowable. Thus, from what can be gathered from the texts is a situation in which segmentary lineage structures are likely to have been eclipsed, to some degree, by access to material and ideological means by which to project political hierarchy within those societies. Nevertheless, the model of segmentary lineage systems developed in this dissertation still serves a useful heuristic purpose when applied to the Mari archive, just as its application to post-segmentary lineage societies in Chapter 3 produced insights in those cases.

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<sup>383</sup> Also published as LAPO 17 830 (Durand 1998).

Here the usefulness of segmentary lineage systems in the period of the OB archives of Mari will be investigated with respect to two different case studies: 1) the *tēbibtum*, or ‘census’ and 2) the case of Uranum and elders of Dabiš, who seemingly petition to switch their tribal allegiance. Comments on these phenomena are not meant to be exhaustive of the OB Mari corpus, or of the applicability of segmentary lineage systems in illuminating the sociopolitical landscape of Syria and the Jezireh in the MBA in general, but rather serve to indicate the heuristic value of the approach advocated for here.

### *Tēbibtum*

The institution of the *tēbibtum*, a sort of census, is not widely attested in the OB corpus of texts from Mari. The two instances that are known from the archive date to what Durand termed, “des moments très importants et uniques et ne représentent pas des événements récurrents” (1998: 334). One, in the reign of Yasmaḥ-Addu was carried out following a series of military campaigns, and the other, in the fifth year of Zimri-Lim’s reign, was carried out among the Yaminites, after their unsuccessful uprising against his reign. The *tēbibtum* has a somewhat mysterious etymological pedigree and is clearly matter of some distaste for mobile pastoral populations, as shown in two letters exchanged between Šamši-Addu and Yasmaḥ-Addu (ARM 1 6 and 87), treated in more detail, below. Explanations for this distaste predicated on previous models of MBA ‘tribalism’ have thus far proven unsatisfactory. The basic meaning of a census was identified by Kupper already in 1950, at which time he also proposed that the term carried some religious connotation, following from a proposed connection to the verb

*ebēbu*, and hence, some relationship to a meaning of ‘purity’, thus a ‘purification’ (103). This association is far from clear, however, and while maintaining the connection of the *tēbibtum* with census, Durand has rejected any such etymological connection (1998: 334). Others have not (e.g. Sasson 2015: 125 note 14). Durand has shown that the *tēbibtum* resulted in some sort of military conscription among the population subject to it (1998: 334-335), but also a reallocation and redistribution of land and other resources from the central administration (1998: 335-336). Citing ARM I 6 and 87, Porter has argued that mobile pastoral populations find the idea of the *tēbibtum* repugnant because it implies delivering an oath of fealty (2012: 35). A closer reading of two texts in particular, though, suggests some other factor operating to produce this distaste.

In the first 19 lines of ARM 1 87, a letter from Šamši-Addu to Yasmaḥ-Addu, the former mentions a *tēbibtum* which he intended to carry out among the *ḥanum*, but has not, owing to ‘la repugnance à se laisser recenser’ (Durand 1998: 345). The passage is terse and incompletely preserved. Reasons for the ‘repugnance’ are further illuminated in lines 5-21 on the tablet ARM 1 6 (Dossin 1950), another letter from Šamši-Addu to Yasmaḥ-Addu:

I have listened to the tablets you have sent me. You wrote to me about censusing the Yaminites. It is not appropriate to census the Yaminites. If you census them, their brothers, the Rabbu, who are residing across the river in Yamhad will hear (of it) and they will be displeased at them and they will not return to their country. Thus, do not census them. Deliver a strong decree to them. This is their decree: “The king will campaign. From the youngest, all must assemble. Any *sugagum* whose troop lacks even a single man will ‘eat the oath’ of the king.” This is the decree you should give to them. Whatever (happens), do not census them.

If the Yaminites’ difficulty with the *tēbibtum* resulted from being pressed into military service, or in swearing fealty, what would be the use of not carrying out the census, but instead demanding that they participate in the king’s campaign, nonetheless? The

explanation that they sought to avoid an oath of service seems to make no sense, having no bearing on the ultimate result: conscription.<sup>384</sup> If not entirely a result of conscription, what, then, can explain this unique ‘repugnance’ which these populations had to the *tēbibtum*? The sin on the parts of Šamši-Addu and Yasmaḥ-Addu, above, seems not to have been in the conscription, then, but in the actual enumeration of the population. Furthermore, a close reading of the text indicates that the problem results not directly from those who are subject to the census, but rather ‘their brothers’, which is to say, members of a Yaminite segment, the Rabbu. Historical circumstances of the *tēbibtum*, and an appreciation within the context of a segmentary lineage system, will demonstrate why this would be the case.

Irons gave an indication as to why the enumeration of segments in a segmentary lineage society by an outside power might be cause for concern among those segments in his discussion of his time among the Yomut Turkmen. In one situation to which he was privy, two Yomut Turkmen were arrested for the illicit cultivation of opium. The Iranian authorities initially announced that each man would serve an eight-year prison sentence. The ‘mobilization’ of 70 different households, though, persuaded the authorities to commute the sentences of the two men to two years apiece.

Situations like this are responsible for the frequent statements to the effect that in the past a lineage’s strength depended on the number of riflemen it could muster, whereas today it depends on their collective wealth. It is important to observe that the traditional pattern of alliance still holds even when government intervention is unavoidable, although the means by which traditional obligations must be fulfilled are altered...

The Yomut of the Gurgan Plain still take pride in the size of their descent group. One literate Aq-Atabay informant... complained that accounts of the

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<sup>384</sup> Although the turnout for the campaign is admittedly likely to have been somewhat reduced, nevertheless, it cannot be said that the decree was ineffective. The three texts ARM 3 12, ARM 3 16, and ARM 2 92 seem to be related to the situation that Šamši-Addu addressed in ARM 1 6. ARM 3 12 in particular seems to indicate the effectiveness of the decree.

Turkmen written in Persian always praise the Jēfērbay at the expense of the Aq-Atabay because the Jēfērbay have much contact with the government and with influential Iranians. He added with pride, however, that in fact the Jēfērbay are “nothing” in comparison to the Aq-Atabay who outnumber the Jēfērbay and certainly have greater wealth among their total numbers.

1975: 80

This is not only a sentiment among the Yomut Turkmen at the time of Irons’ study, as he cited (ibid) Vambery’s much earlier account (1865: 359) of the same phenomenon. It has also been noted more generally as a feature of segmentary lineage systems by Salzman (2008: 112), and was reflected in his time among the Sarhadi Baluch in the question that was often put to him, discussed in Chapter 3, of how strong his lineage was (2000: 231). In relation to the *tēbibtum*, the point is this: the relative political power of segments within a segmentary lineage system is, to a large extent, a result of their potential strength in manpower, which bears a direct relationship to the size of their adult male population. A census of some or all lineages in such a system, by an outsider—as both Yasmaḥ-Addu’s and Zimri-Lim’s censuses were—is a source of knowledge about the internal politics of that system and, hence, a potential source of political power for two related reasons. The first is simply an appreciation for the potential power that the group could muster, either for or against the census taker. But there is another, more insidious source of power from the perspective of the segmentary lineage system. From the perspective of an individual within a segmentary lineage system, that system should ideally always present as a unified political front to an outside power, just as any segment within it should present as a unified front to any other segment of the same level. In the presence of power relations that transcend that boundary to unequal effect among segments, as among the Yomut Turkmen, where they favor the relatively less powerful Jēfērbay lineage, over the Aq-Atabay lineage, an outside power can warp those internal power



relations to their own advantage, and especially to the disadvantage of some segments in the segmentary lineage system.<sup>385</sup> Ostensibly, this explains the hesitancy of some populations to the *tēbibtum*, and the fact that in the case of it would irritate, specifically, a *different* segment, in the example of Yasmaḥ-Addu's census, 'their brothers, the Rabbu'. It is not surprising, then, that the carrying out of a *tēbibtum* during the reign of Zimri-Lim was important enough to merit its use as a year-name, or that it came after the military defeat of the Yaminites who were to be counted (Durand 1998: 334).

### *Zurûḫātum, rittum, and nighum*

A second example of a situation recorded in the Mari archives that can be more fully comprehended with appeal to a segmentary lineage system, albeit somewhat more obliquely than the example above, is an exchange recorded in lines 32-41 of text A.981. This episode has been cited as evidence that tribespeople could change their tribal affiliation (Durand 1992; Sasson 2015: 300):

...Uranum and the elders of Dabiš came and said to me, "From birth, we were not *yaradum* in the Yaḥurra-tribe, and in the encampments we have neither a *ḫibrum* nor *kadum*. We are *zurûḫātum* at the Yaḥrur-tribe. We wish to enter into the heart of the Simal-tribe, among the Niḫad, and slaughter a donkey."<sup>386</sup>

Fleming has suggested that the above episode instead reflects the intent of the elders of Dabiš to affiliate themselves with the Niḫad Simalites, "without necessarily giving up [their] Yaminite identification with the Yaḥrur-tribe" (2004a: 97). Miglio has suggested

<sup>385</sup> Ostensibly the same explanation could be offered for the episode of David's census in 2 Samuel 24. McCarter (1984) has suggested that the wrath visited upon David resulted from his failure to satisfy some sort of religious significance. This does not, however, explain Joab's apparent reticence at the beginning of that narrative, nor does it explain the abhorrence with which the men of Levi and Benjamin treated the census as recorded in a parallel account in 1 Chronicles 21.

<sup>386</sup> *u-ra-nu-um ù lūŠU.GI.MEŠ<sup>3</sup> / ša da-bi-iš<sup>ki</sup> il-li-ku-nim-ma / um-[m]a-mi iš-tu ši-t<im> } ši-tim / i-na ia-ḫu-ur-ra ú-ul ia-ra-du-um / ni-ni ù i-na na-we-e-im ḫi-ib-ra-am / ù ka-di ú-ul ni-šu / zu-ru-ḫa-tum a-na ia-aḫ-ru-ur ni-nu / a-na li-ib-bi DUMU s-i[m-a]l / i-na ni-ḫa-di i n[i-r]u-ub-ma<sup>anše</sup> ḫa-a-ri / i ni-iq-ṭu-ul*

more recently that the episode reflects an inter-tribal pact, or alliance, such as the *ḥipšum* appears to have been (2014: 146-149). One significant source of uncertainty in the interpretation of this passage is the term *yaradum*. Durand has connected this term with *warādum*, suggesting “à comprendre sans doute comme «se sédentariser»” (1992: 119), citing in part FM 3.4 I:16-21 (Birot 1980: 142). Miglio instead interpreted both passages to indicate the term “to be an ethnic appellative” (2014: 150). None of these explanations, though, touch on the significance that these people of Dabiš lack both a *ḥibrum* and a *kadum* among the Yaḥrur. Sasson understood the situation among these individuals as being a feeling of “a loss of status” (1998: 105). The specific senses of both of these words are elusive.<sup>387</sup> Nonetheless, they seem to indicate not simply a perceived loss of status, but rather a literal disenfranchisement. To be more precise, these residents of Dabiš seem to claim that they are not actually members of the Yaḥurra. The term which helps to illustrate the full significance of the situation recorded in the above passage, among the admittedly difficult vocabulary, is *zurûḥātum*, a plural form of the singular *zuruh*, ‘arm’. Comparison of this episode with a similar situation in the case of a town in the Khabur, Zalluḥan, and a contextualization of the geopolitical landscape of Mari during the time covered by the archives, gives further evidence of the existence of a sort of attenuated situation of segmentary lineage systems in the geopolitical landscape of Mari.

A synonym of *zuruh*, *rittu* appears in a five-line section (35-39) of the text ARM 28 79 (Kupper 1998: 109-112), with what I would argue is a similar metonymical use:

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<sup>387</sup> See Fleming 2004: 97-100, who understands *ḥibrum* as a more specific term than *ḥanum* for mobile pastoralist. According to Charpin and Durand, the term in question is *kadûm*, and seems to indicate some kind of political authority in the steppe (2004: 112-113). The *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* provides a translation of *kâdu* as “festhalten” (Von Soden 1965: 420), which agrees with the sense with which this passage is interpreted to have here.

You said to me: “Zalluḥan is not a child of Ida-maraš. It is a child of the Simalites.” Please, my lord, write to Ibal-pi-El, so that with the *hana*, the people of my district may go toward the border<sup>388</sup> and he (Ibal-pi-El) may put his hand upon me.<sup>389</sup>

Here, Zakura-Abum, a fellow Simalite and, ostensibly lieutenant of Zimri-Lim, is clearly asking for the protection of Zimri-Lim for the city of Zalluḥan through some formal, symbolic, perhaps legal action taken on the part of the Simalite *merḥum*, Ibal-pi-El. Durand has argued persuasively that this protection is being afforded in the form of a sort of tribal adoption (2004: 147). Adam Miglio discusses why the status of this center might be in doubt,

The city of Zalluhan belonged to two worlds. First, the city was located in the western Habur triangle within the geographic orbit of the land of Ida-Maras... Second, while Zalluhan was within the [land] of Ida-Maras, it was simultaneously part of the Simal mobile pastoralists’ *nighum*.

2014: 98

The phenomenon of the *nighum* seems to be associated with this event in a wider cultural and sociopolitical context, involving mobile pastoralism and the relationship between the mobile pastoral polities of the Ebla archives with sedentary ones. Miglio translated the *nighum* as “customary pastoral route” in his treatment of A.2730, a document which, he felt, “perhaps best illustrates the concept of *nighum*” (2014: 77). A consideration of this document will help to establish this relationship. Sasson (2015: 146) translated the relevant passage of this letter between the *merḥum*, Ibal-El and Zimri-Lim thus:

Now on the land of Idamaraš about which he... wrote to you, “Stay away from this land!” answer him as follows, “Just as the lands of Yamḥad, Qatna, and Amurrû make a *nighum* for the Yaminites, so that the Yaminites can satisfy their hunger and feed their flocks, well then, since generations, the *nighum* for nomads is the Idamaraš. In what way have nomads troubled Idamaraš? What is good for

<sup>388</sup> For this interpretation of the difficult passage *a-na IGI pa-<ti>-im li-it-ta-la-ku*, see Durand 1987: 230.

<sup>389</sup> [*um-ma at-t[a-ma z[a-al]-lu-ḥa-an ú-ul dumu i-da-ma-ra-aš* / [*dumu si*]-*im-a-al be-li a-na*<sup>1</sup>*i-ba-al-pí-el* / [*l*]-*i-š-pu-ra-am-ma it-t[i] ḥa-na*<sup>meš</sup> / *dumu*<sup>meš</sup> *ḥa-al-ší-ia a-na IGI pa-<ti>-im li-it-ta-la-ku* / *ù ri-it-ta-šu e-li-ia li-iš-ku-un*

the nomads is also good for the Idamarāṣ. So why has Idamarāṣ troubled the nomads? It has killed governors of mine. It has marched captives, male and female, nubile women (*kallātum*) and servants, belonging to me. It has grabbed sheep, oxen, donkeys, and livestock from my land. In no way had I done it wrong or burned its harvest. It [Idamarāṣ] has forever been my *nighum*. Why would I have troubled it?” My lord should answer him in this way and add as much as occurs to him.

It is clear in the above except that Ibal-El is making the argument to Zimri-Lim, that the Simal have a certain right to the territory of Ida-maraṣ. In this context it is important to note that, unlike Mari, which was a truly ‘dimorphic’ state, being composed of both sedentary and mobile populations, with a concomitant bureaucratic division between those two worlds (e.g. Sasson 2015: 119), Ida-maraṣ was a specifically sedentary polity. Therefore, it is possible to understand the situation of Zakura-Abum, at Zalluḥan, in ARM 28 79, above, not as appealing to have the residents of Zalluḥan formally adopted into the Simal tribe, but rather to be included into the Simal *nighum*, to the exclusion of any question that they be subject to the will of the land of Ida-maraṣ. Zakura-Abum wishes to make the status of Zalluḥan as a client of the Simal, explicit. Uranum and the elders of Dabiš, in text A.981 cited at the beginning of this section, should be understood, then, not as asking to switch their tribal identity from Yaminite to Simalite, nor to form a tribal alliance between their segment and the Niḥad segment of the Simalites, but rather they are speaking as a sedentary polity, exclusively—as is apparently the point of their initial disclaimer<sup>390</sup>, that they are simply under the protection of the Yaḥrur, and not of the Yaḥrur themselves—and petitioning to become clients of Simal. In the context of a recent military victory by Zimri-Lim over the Yaminites, this is, perhaps, not a surprising development.

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<sup>390</sup> If *yaradum* here could be understood to derive from *warādum*, whether or not it carries the sense of a sedentary population, it would serve support this interpretation.

### *Segmentary Lineage Systems as a Heuristic Model for the Old Babylonian Period*

The above two case studies are not meant to stand in for an exhaustive analysis of the OB corpus of Mari letters with reference to the model of segmentary lineage systems that has been offered in this dissertation. It does, nevertheless, suggest that such an analysis could produce interesting results. Rather, it had two purposes. One was to establish whether or not the segmentary lineage model developed in this dissertation was relevant to the geopolitical landscape of Southwest Asia in the OB period, as portrayed by the Mari archives. The other purpose was to establish whether or not there was any reason to believe that the appearance of mobile pastoralism at the end of the EBA and beginning of the MBA, documented in both the material and textual records, had any relationship to segmentary lineage systems.

On the first point, it can be said that despite the fact that the mobile pastoral ‘tribes’ identified in the Mari archives cannot be conclusively demonstrated to operate purely on segmentary lineage principles—and nor should they, when there is such clear evidence of their engagement with sedentary sources of political inequality—an appreciation for a segmentary lineage system, even in this attenuated circumstance, nonetheless provides insight into the world of Old Babylonian international politics. Furthermore, there is a possibility that other candidate segmentary lineage societies did exist at this time, being unrecorded in the Mari archive, or simply not recorded with adequate sociopolitical resolution to recognize them as such. Porter has previously argued that

the very task of sorting out who is a pastoralist, who an Amorrite, who really a town dweller, and who a king rather than a tribal chief, is an exercise in

frustration, and moreover rather misses the point. The Old Babylonian texts represent a complex network of identification that *should* defy categorization...

2012: 36

The analysis offered in the two case studies above suggests that, while there may indeed be a great amount of ambiguity in the textual record from OB Mari, when armed with a relevant sociopolitical model, it is indeed possible to begin the task of sorting out identities. This analysis further suggests that the distinction between mobile and sedentary is particularly important. To that point, when and how those identities can be shown to be amalgamated, does not contradict the expectations of the model, but rather suggests a certain amount of historical change that is leading either to the eclipse of one of these forms of identity, or the creation of a new category or categories. The ways in which the model falls short of describing the perceived system obtaining at the time of its recording, then, may suggest novel contingent circumstances that expand our understanding of the ancient world. It has been argued in this dissertation that Porter's frustration results from the omission of the segmentary lineage model as a heuristic tool to aid in such attempts at identification.

Although at least some of the mobile pastoral groups that appear in the Mari texts could ostensibly be categorized as 'post'-segmentary lineage societies, having their systems attenuated by sedentary power structures, it would not be a mistake to simply reference cases of post-segmentary lineage societies known from the ethnographic record—of which the details of a few were related in Chapter 3. This is because the historically contingent circumstances in each case have led to different outcomes. In the modern period, the overwhelming trend noted was the subjugation of mobile pastoral communities into modern, sedentary nation-states. By contrast, the Mari archives give

the impression of a world that is politically and militarily dominated by mobile pastoral populations (e.g. Miglio 2014: 127-139). Nevertheless, it is a sense of the functioning of segmentary lineage systems as systems that allows the adaptation of this paradigm to individual, unique circumstances, while retaining its heuristic value.

To the second point mentioned above, the apparent applicability of segmentary lineage structures to some aspects of mobile pastoral communities in the Mari archives suggests numerous questions relating to the roughly six century period of time between that covered by the archives of Ebla and Mari. If the absence of evidence relating to mobility in the material and textual record of the EBA is a reflection of reality, and if such groups did begin to appear in parts of the Syrian Jezireh by the end of the third millennium, BC, this then raises the question of where these mobile pastoral groups came from, how they impacted the existing sociopolitical landscape and how it, in turn, impacted their sociopolitical structures. Were these groups incorporated into sedentary power relations from the beginning of the MBA or was that an ongoing process, even in the period covered by the Mari archives? Miglio makes a compelling case that the nature of power relations between sedentary and mobile communities changed significantly during the reign of Zimri-Lim's father, Yaḥdun-Lim (2014: 57-67). Whatever the answers to these questions, the brief consideration of the Mari archives, above, suggests that the segmentary lineage system is a sociopolitical model relevant to their investigation.

## Conclusion

The review of historical information relevant to the existence of mobile pastoral populations and segmentary lineage systems in Syria, in light of the definition of that sociological system offered in Chapters 2 and 3, led to the conclusion in Chapter 7 that in Syrian texts from the Early Bronze Age there is no compelling positive material evidence attesting to the existence of such societies in Syria. This review in this chapter, however, demonstrated that when the scope of documents under consideration is expanded to include texts from southern Mesopotamia, such phenomena can be identified. A review of the last two chapters will demonstrate these conclusions. First, there is neither positive nor negative evidence relating to tribalism in the EBA texts excavated at Tell Beydar, ancient Nabada. These texts relate only to the production of herds under the control of the central administration and do not interact with the economy of that city in such a way as to suggest the presence or absence of mobile pastoral communities, or even independent sedentary flocks of sheep or goats.<sup>391</sup> Second, it is clear that the evidence for mobile pastoralism in the Ebla texts, especially as a source of any correlated political phenomena, has been overstated in many cases not only over the last few decades, but also very recently. Attempts to identify such populations on purely etymological grounds have been shown to be either incorrect (sa-gáz) or without any corroborating support (KAM<sub>4</sub>.MU, *da-mu*, *li-im*). These attempts seem to have been inspired largely by an *a priori* assumption that such groups must have existed and must be identifiable somewhere in the corpus. This is true also of nearly all polities that appear in the texts, most notably in the case of Martu. There are indications of political segmentation of

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<sup>391</sup> Although the impression given by the fertility rates that have been computed in that chapter, although from clearly incomplete records, give the impression of a policy of sheep herd growth, the incompleteness of the record casts ambiguity on the significance of that growth.



some sort. Segmentation, however, is not unique to segmentary lineage systems. While such systems remain a possible explanation for some polities or other phenomenon in the Ebla texts, the overall impression is that evidence even for mobile pastoralism in the archives is underwhelming. What can be said clearly is that if such populations did exist at that time, they either did not play a significant political or cultural role in Syrian society (which seems unlikely, unless they were comparatively small) or that relevant information needed to make such a determination was simply not recorded in an identifiable way or has not yet been recognized.

Third, in this chapter, a review of Neo-Sumerian literature, known largely through copies of texts produced as part of scribal curricula in the Old Babylonian period, does suggest that at that time an historical tradition regarding groups referred to as MAR.TU as mobile pastoralists characterized by some significant structural difference, did exist. It is difficult to know how contemporary political and cultural considerations shaped these OB traditions. Nevertheless, the picture they present complements a small amount of Ur III period documentation and demonstrates that such groups were in existence on the frontiers of that state, at least to the northeast and in the eastern part of the Syrian Jezireh. Leaving aside the question of the role that such groups might have played in the downfall of that state, some scholars have placed these groups primarily to the east and north of southern Mesopotamia. Others, conflating the term MAR.TU with the toponym known from the Ebla corpus have placed such groups in Syria, near the Jebel Bishri. When this conflation is factored out, no positive evidence for such a correlation remains. Nevertheless, this absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and it is possible that the KUR MAR.TU in Ur III texts characterized nearly all of the plains of Upper

Mesopotamia, including much of the Syrian Jezireh (cf. Sallaberger 2007: 449). Even if there is no etymological connection between the use of the term MAR.TU as a general sociological term relating to tribalism and the meaning ‘west’, as is argued here, this does not preclude the possibility that such groups might not still be found in Syria. The Amorites, being a group of MAR.TU, inasmuch as they can be identified as a single, unified group, are most likely to be found in a westerly location, as opposed to the GUTI or TIDNUM, who are more clearly documented in the Zagros region, east of the Tigris. Fourth, analysis of the OB archives of Mari at the end of this chapter demonstrated that mobile pastoral groups were ubiquitous in the landscape at that time and, although attenuated to some degree by their association with sedentary sources of power and inequality, nonetheless possessed sociopolitical features characterizing segmentary lineage systems.

Documentary evidence, including EBA texts and MBA literature relating historical traditions about the EBA, strongly suggests the presence of mobile pastoral groups at the end of the EBA in Syria, very likely characterized by segmentary lineage structures, even if those structures had been attenuated to some degree. Unfortunately, this evidence is otherwise inconclusive regarding their geographical and chronological distribution throughout the third millennium. It remains now to integrate these observations from the historical record with those drawn from the archaeological record, which were presented in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusions**

This study was initially focused on determining the presence or absence of mobile pastoral groups in EBA Syria, ascertaining the role that such groups played in the development and disintegration of highly specialized, urban EBA societies in Syria, and parenthetically to determine if these goals are possible. The results of this study, though, have provided novel methods and conclusions suggesting new questions that go beyond this original focus. In part, this is because it has entailed an extensive review of not only the material record, but also the historical and ethnographic records. All of these results will be presented below, beginning with those most specific and proximate to EBA Syrian societies, then extrapolating to larger relevant methodological and theoretical issues that underlay these conclusions.

A synthesis of the results following from the studies of the cultural, material, and historical records strongly suggests that mobile pastoral groups, whether or not characterized by segmentary lineage systems, had no presence in Syria until the very end of the EBA, at a time of transition to the MBA. At the very least, it was found that previous arguments that such mobile pastoral ‘tribal’ groups were present, in various places and at various times in the Syrian EBA, are based on questionable material evidence of mobile pastoralism. Instead, these opinions were primarily informed by hypotheses regarding the cultural or sociopolitical effects of mobile pastoralism on sedentary societies. It has been demonstrated that the effects cited as having an association with mobile pastoralism are either irrelevant according to the model developed in this dissertation, or are not specific to that phenomenon, following from the

model of segmentary lineage systems developed in Chapter 3. While the absence of evidence, both archaeological and historical, is not necessarily evidence of absence, at some point it must be. Within the archaeological record, itself, this is suggested by the disparity between EBA and MBA remains in five different survey regions near and beyond the limits of agriculture, where MBA mobile groups are indicated while a similar EBA use of the landscape is not indicated. This is true even despite the apparent fact of a worsening climate at that time and a reduction in sedentary occupation of the landscape, meaning less competition for pasturage with agricultural pursuits. Evidence of this absence is complemented by an analysis of the historical record of EBA Syria, especially when compared to evidence obtaining from the MBA archives of Mari. Deriving primarily from the site of ancient Ebla, these texts contain evidence that is, at best, ambiguous as to the presence of mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems in EBA Syria. Late EBA and MBA texts from Southern Mesopotamia, though some of these are likely to have been the subject of redactions that jeopardize a historical nature, do preserve indications of mobile pastoral groups, at least in the eastern part of the Syrian Jezireh following the disintegration of EBA settlement systems there, and suggest that they may be characterized by segmentary lineage systems. A brief review of some relevant texts from the MBA archives of Mari suggests that, even if pure segmentary lineage societies cannot be identified there, those groups that are best attested are likely to have had such systems attenuated by the interaction with sedentary power structure, the segmentary lineage model nonetheless provides insight into the geopolitical context of Mari in the OB period.

These conclusions emphasize the significance and complexity of cultural processes taking place in the MBA transition and suggest a new question: where did these mobile pastoral populations come from? It is beyond the scope of this study to even begin to venture an answer to this question. An explanation of demographic changes in the ancient Near East that has been commonly put forward is that, during times of ecological or political stress, populations simply adopted a mobile pastoral lifestyle. Appeal to ethnohistorically-attested mobile pastoral populations, subject to the political whims of technologically superior nation-states informs this opinion. The details of the model of segmentary lineage systems developed in Chapter 3 suggest that such transitions are anything but simple, and that such phenomena require special consideration and study. The structural differences between sedentary and mobile pastoral societies are significant, operating on a fundamental level informing day-to-day activities and thus involving more than simply a change of occupations. Did the structures of mobile pastoralism nevertheless somehow grow organically out of sedentary society? Did mobile pastoral groups on the periphery of Syria play a role in this shift? Possible candidates of study in this regard are mobile pastoral groups attested in southern Mesopotamia, such as the Guti and Tidnum, which seem to have inhabited the Zagros uplands and, possibly, the plains of Northern Mesopotamia at the end of the third millennium BC are also potentially relevant subjects of study in this regard. Other questions will be much more difficult to answer outside of an historical context. For instance, did a segmentary lineage character initially obtain among these groups, to be attenuated as the MBA wore on, or did it obtain from their origin? Related to this is the question of how these early MBA mobile

pastoralists related to the sedentary world, ostensibly significantly reduced after the end of the EBA.

These points underline a broader, methodological contribution that has followed from this study: the establishment of the potential structural significance of mobile pastoral societies, in the form of segmentary lineage systems. Reasons for the obfuscation of these systems were presented in Chapter 2. These amount to the convoluted etymological history of the term, having been inspired, in its English use, from an application to originally mobile pastoral societies in biblical sources. Adaptation of ‘tribe’ and ‘tribal society’ to evolutionary systems, even when aspects of those systems have been rejected, nevertheless conferred upon the term broader implications of kinship and segmentation. The establishment of the relationship between mobile pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems, in Chapter 3, and the exploration of the material implications of those relationships, in Chapter 4, provide a structural and material model of segmentary lineage systems that can be applied outside of the geographical and chronological focus of this study. For instance, access to new archaeological territories in Iraqi Kurdistan offers potentially fertile possibilities in investigating the nature of mobile pastoralism in the EBA and MBA in Northern Mesopotamia.

Finally, this study has underlined the importance of continued and significant interaction, on the part of Near Eastern archaeologists and historians, with broader anthropological discourses, especially those that are specifically ethnographic. Continued misunderstanding of the existence and significance of segmentary lineage systems, following from a paucity of interaction with relevant ethnographic discourses, underlay the widespread opinion that mobile pastoral groups, and implicitly associated

sociopolitical features, could be detected in EBA sedentary societies. It is not only the material and historical records that are necessary to uncovering the nature of past human lives and societies, but also the cultural record. As the adaptation of segmentary lineage systems from these ethnographic sources undertaken in Chapter 3 demonstrates, though, an archaeological perspective is not without potential value to ethnology, either.

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## Curriculum Vitae

Christopher D. Brinker was born in Washington, Missouri on September 19, 1983. He graduated *magna cum laude* with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Archaeology and Biological Anthropology from Boston University in 2006. Immediately after this he began work towards a Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Near Eastern Studies department at The Johns Hopkins University. While pursuing that degree he taught various courses at The Johns Hopkins University, including the Archaeology of Death and Burial and the Archaeology of Beer. He has given papers at domestic and international scholarly conferences. His research has been published in the journal *Altorientalische Forschungen* and in the proceedings of a conference at Charles University in Prague, *Egypt and the Near East – the Crossroads*. He has participated in field work at Tells es-Sweyhat and Umm el-Marra in Syria, and at the Mut Temple at Karnak in Luxor, Egypt. He is currently aiding in the preparation of the publication concerning excavations around the Mut Temple Sacred Lake. Since 2013 he has served as an associate director of The Johns Hopkins University excavations at Tell Kurd Qaburstan in Iraqi Kurdistan.